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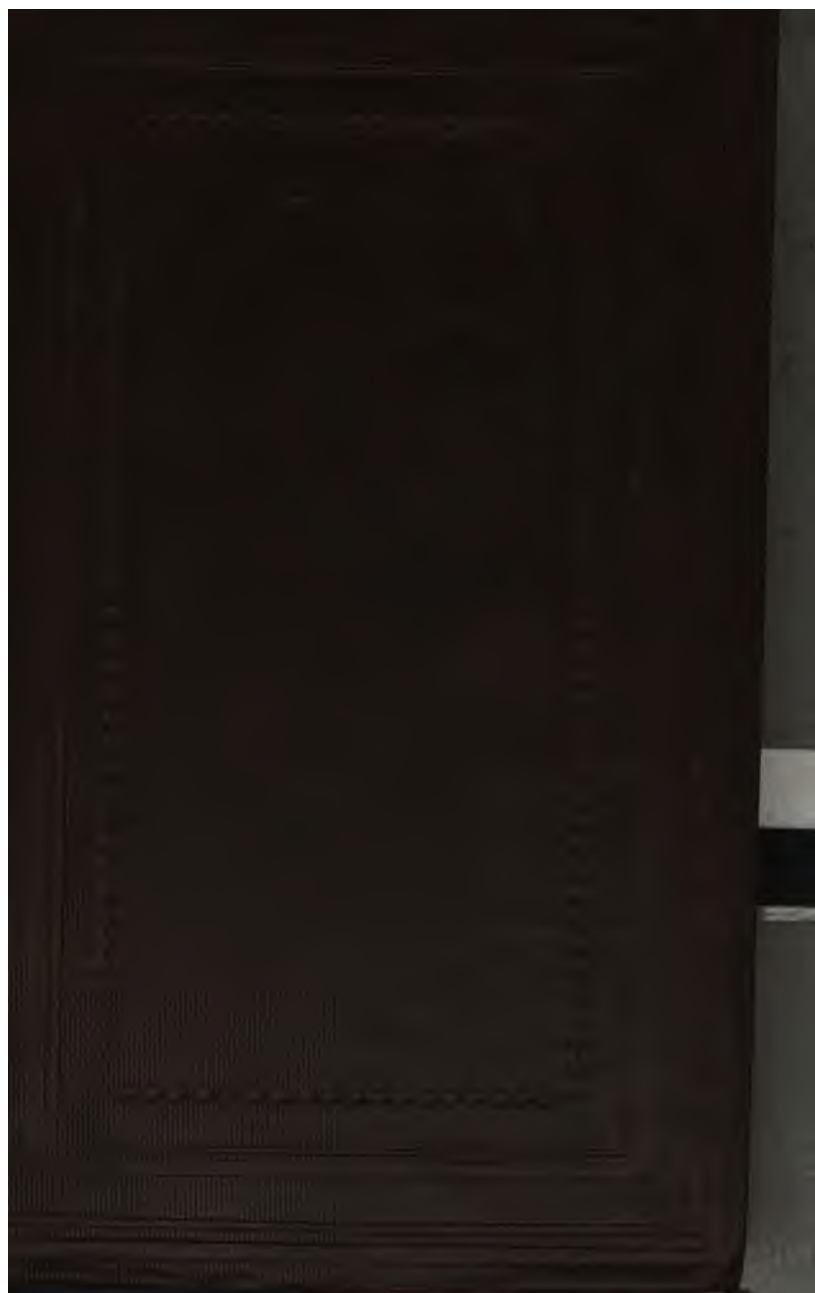
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**HISTORICAL AND PRACTICAL
SERMONS**

ON THE

**SUFFERINGS AND RESURRECTION
OF OUR LORD.**

**BY ONE OF THE WRITERS OF THE "TRACTS FOR THE
CHRISTIAN SEASONS."**

VOLUME I.

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SERMON I.

CHRIST'S SUFFERING PRIESTHOOD.

For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.—HEB. iv. 15.

THERE are few who do not know the blessings of a friend,—whether affliction, like a cloud, has hidden the sunshine of earthly prosperity, and taken away those who most on earth were loved ; or death left desolate one or more places in the little circle of home, and years still left the blank not filled up. Has this ever happened to you, and have you not known the comfort of pouring your tale of sorrow into the bosom of a friend ? or illness worn your frame, and stayed your hand from the usual occupations of active life : during its wearisome hours, have you never known the comfort of hearing the voice of a friend to cheer your weariness and relieve your sorrow ?

Has doubt never, like a troubled ocean, rolled its waves across your soul, which craved for peace ; and have you never applied in that moment to a friend, and found, by applying to him, that cloud roll away from your mind ?

I cannot believe that such has never been the case with you. If so, I would ask you to come for awhile with me to contemplate One who is of all friends the greatest.

And how infinitely has the comfort been increased, when the Friend we apply to has not only a heart willing to listen to our sorrows, but who has Himself borne sorrows of a similar kind ; not only a feeling, but a sympathizing Friend !

But again : how disappointing is it when we find those on whom we rely so much, those who have been able to feel with us and to feel for us, subject to corruption and to change to the same degree as we are ourselves ; to find that in the more real matters of trouble—those connected with death, eternity, and judgment—they can be of no use to us at all ! This is disappointing, and should drive us to look for some more lasting, more secure Friend, who is beyond the reach of change or the taint of corruption ; and who at the same time can be a sympathizing,

a tender, and a powerful Friend and Assistant to us. Such we shall never find below, seek it where we may, hope it as we wish. A brighter and a purer land must produce that which a guilty and fallen race can never afford us.

And how fully does the character of Christ come up to this ! how fully does it answer the description of that Friend which the yearning bosom of restless man must ever be seeking for, and, save in Him, seeking in vain !

The words of our text reveal to our notice a doctrine more full of comfort than any other among the pages of holy Scripture. While one part may frown on us with the terrors of offended Jehovah, and another smile upon us with a look borrowed from the scenes of Calvary ; while here we listen to the voice of a divine law, beyond human fulfilment, uttered to us in the thunders of Sinai ; while elsewhere we read of a Saviour Himself able, and Himself willing, to obey for us the commands of the law, and to bear for us its penalties ; all this we may read, and yet feel that there is a distance between God and man, a difference in their feelings, which still leaves imperfect the beautiful scheme of human redemption : still, as a man, we look for a man's feelings, before we can take real comfort

of a crucified Redeemer. And here the doctrine of our text shines upon us in the full refulgence of imperishable, sympathizing love, which passes the understanding of mortality.

In all His greatness, and in all His divinity, accustomed to the hosannas of angels, and living amid the seraph-choirs of a far-off land,—at once the Son of the unseen Jehovah and the Saviour of fallen man,—Jesus Christ is not so far above us that He “cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are.” Blessed truth!—a pitying, a powerful, and a sympathizing Saviour!

Let us then see, 1. How our High Priest is capable of being touched with a feeling of our infirmities; 2. The comfort derived to us from the knowledge of that truth.

His life, His death, and His actions are one long history of this fact. He came upon an errand of mercy; and though, while fulfilling His errand, He had to endure the sharp attacks of scorn and insult,—“Away with such a man from the earth,”—His patience and His goodness were still prepared with the answer,—“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Blasphemed by some, neglected by others, attacked by foes and betrayed by friends, He re-

mains "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." He followed, and He follows still, like a good Shepherd, the wanderers of His flock, and brings them back rejoicing to His fold. Ingratitude and unkindness have never quenched His love ; and His arm is still held out to cover with the robe of His righteousness all who will consent to accept it from His hand. All this has He done. But all this might be done, and—though won by the beauty of so deep, so undeserved a love ; though brought to own our own ingratitude and guilt, and led to weep at the cross whose reproach we had refused to bear, and whose cause we had despised—yet we might be inclined to say, All this might He have borne and suffered, and yet we cannot approach Him nearer ; for as God He bore it, and with the feelings of God He suffered, and He can never know my sufferings ; He can never know the drawbacks of temptation, the hindrances of a body, the constant wearisomeness of the flesh. Even an angel would not suit us here, for his feelings could never accord with ours, far less the perfect purity of God Himself. We want *a man*. He must be *a man* ; if He were not a man, we could not look upon Him as a brother looks upon his brother. We want a man in the weakness of his

humanity ; one who can feel weariness and cold hunger and thirst ; one, too, who can feel these things to be a trial ; one, too, must he be who could be tempted of Satan. But all this while we want, with human weakness, purity too,—a pure and yet a weak man,—or else he can be of little use to us.

How beautifully in this respect does Christ shew Himself suited to answer all our wants. In each stage of His earthly career, “ perfect God and perfect man ;” while a human Child, subject to human parents, and yet all the while about His heavenly Father’s business ; though accustomed to higher honours than ever were paid to earthly monarch, and crowned with jewels more precious than those which glitter in any earthly diadem ; yet in the midst of it all choosing not the monarchs of earth to follow His footsteps, but the despised fishermen of Galilee, that He might know the feelings and the sorrows of those who suffered from the wants of poverty ; and whose situation is thus raised above the lot of the most powerful earthly monarch, by its having been shared by Him who was King of kings and Lord of lords. Without a settled home, or where to lay His head, rejected at one village and scarcely received at another ; where

is the homeless wanderer on the cheerless waste of the world who cannot turn to his Saviour and say, "In all points was He like me!" Persecuted by foes, betrayed by friends, forsaken by all, where is the heart that, amid the opposition of ungodly friends, or the ridicule of persecuting enemies, still burns with a secret love of its despised Redeemer, that cannot say, "In all points as I am, so was He!" And not only in the larger sorrows and infirmities of human nature did He share with us its troubles, but, weary with His journeys of love beneath the burning sun of the Eastern sky, He sank down in weariness at the well of Samaria, and slumbered at midnight on the wave of Gennesaret,—as if to offer a consolation to those whose lot it might be to labour for a hard-earned livelihood, in allowing them to feel that even here, as they are, so was He. No sorrow, no weakness too low for Him to share, no blessing too high for Him to grant. And then, in the last sad scenes of His earthly career, how striking, how consoling the display of His manhood and His Godhead,—as if resolved to offer His deepest consolation to the sojourner on earth, at that moment in the history of man which requires the largest share of comfort and support,—a dying hour. He shrank not from the horrors of

that dark moment, but met it, and met it with the feelings of man, though with the love of God. We have but to follow Him to the solitude of Gethsemane, and there behold the Son of the Eternal God kneeling before His Father, forgotten and betrayed. Behold there the infirmities of His manhood, when, from the agony of human suffering, He cried out to His Father to let the cup pass from Him; not really wishing to sacrifice the happiness of mankind in order to relieve His sufferings, but to shew us how keen, how deep, how human, were the feelings which then wrung His bosom; to shew us He was a Man! And then, when the storm of anguish had rolled away from His oppressed spirit, how perfect His obedience, how meek His submission,—“Not My will, but Thine be done.” Here was an example of suffering patience, of implicit obedience; here was the love of God, here was the weakness of man; here, from the same bosom which throbbed beneath the intense anguish of suffering, and was darkened by the deepest clouds of sorrow, burst forth a ray of light so pure, that it might dazzle imperfect man to gaze at,—from such suffering, such obedience,—a ray of light from His own burdened mind, to cheer through future years the sorrows of His fellow-man. And happy are they

who can read the lesson given to us by the tale of that hour,—that the only true way to cheer a sorrow is implicit submission to the God who sent it. And while we see Him in the garden exhibiting His will and ours, the will of nature and the will of grace, go still at His footsteps, and behold Him under the hand of man, torn, and wounded, and bleeding, His flesh lacerated with thorns and nails, His precious blood gushing forth upon the soldier's spear; behold Him under the hand of God, bruised as a hateful thing, "the iron entering into His soul;" behold Him left in the darkness of spiritual desertion, exposed to the evil suggestions of Satan, and lifting up that cry of heart-rending agony,

My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world!" of God deserted, and by man despised; hanging on the cross, which rose in solitary awe from the silent earth to a sunless heaven; behold that sight of stupendous wonder, and then say whether He has not indeed borne your nature; whether, indeed, He has not said to all who ever imagine for a moment that God has deserted them, or withdrawn the glories of His sunshine from them,—
"As I am, so was He."

But still behold Him after the wonders of that dying hour, after the midnight of the sepulchre, still a man, and still a fellow-creature:—"I go to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God." Still meek, still lowly, still condescending. He comes to comfort whom He left to heal; and having shewn the sympathies of His manhood in His sorrowful farewells to those who on earth had been His beloved, and yet His too fearful friends; having left a message of mercy to us who, not having seen, yet love; He returned from the scenes of His sorrowing humanity to the redoubled hosannas of angels, to the glories of His Godhead. Well might they cry, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in!" He who in human form demands admission as our Advocate and our Saviour in heaven,—honouring our nature, by Himself carrying it to heaven, the Lord of Hosts,—
"He is the King of glory."

And lastly, behold Him now set down on the right hand of the throne of God, where He ever liveth to make intercession for you. He knows all your sins, He knows all your temptations, He knows all your sorrows; He was Himself tempted like as we are, and He knoweth how to succour

them that are tempted ; He is touched with a feeling of all your infirmities ; in all your afflictions He is afflicted : who shall separate you from His love ?

Such is the sad yet cheering history of your Saviour's life on earth,—a man, and yet a God ; and now He has left us, still a man to feel, and still a God to save ; still our example, and still our guide ; still Himself the way to the heaven to which He calls us.

II. Having, then, followed me into each scene of His human nature, and proved that He was liable to the same sufferings and weaknesses to which you are yourselves ; let us, secondly, see the comfort which we are to gain from this contemplation,—from the feelings with which He looks at us, and from the lessons we are to learn from His conduct under trials.

a. Our best prayers must be imperfect, our warmest praises cold. If, then, we had to offer them to one who understood not the reasons of their weakness, how little encouragement should we feel to approach him. When now we approach the throne of grace, we do not go alone, but assisted and advocated by One who is all-powerful *there*, and who has borne with Him to that world the body which here He dwelt in, as

if to remind Him constantly of the weakness of those who pray to Him.

There are temporal and there are spiritual comforts which we gain from the sympathy of Jesus; for He suffered from trials of soul as well as trials of body. And first, His spiritual temptations. Where is the man who has never known the temptations of Satan? where is the man who has not for the time bent beneath those temptations, and been inclined to exclaim, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" where is the man who has not at some moment said, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" and wished, though often wished in vain, to be rid of his temptations, and to walk in an uninterrupted road to heaven? But this may not be. Had man ever been intended to reach heaven without temptation, Jesus would never have suffered from the tempter in the desert. The road to a better and unfading world is strewed with many a thorn,—the Bible never said it was not; but those thorns have all been trodden before us by the footsteps of our blessed Redeemer, and from that half their pain and half their venom have been destroyed. To walk the path which Jesus has trodden before us cheers indeed the solitude of the wilderness, and makes earth's

darkest moments bright with a triumphant foretaste of heaven. And when temptations assail us, and we feel our bark likely to founder often before we reach the haven to which we go ; when from each fresh repulse Satan comes back again with renewed vehemence to draw our souls into sin ; when he appears every moment in some new shape striving to catch us in his net, and we feel how difficult is the path we have to tread,— what an encouraging thought to go to Him whom Satan tempted before ; to use to Him the words of our sorrowful soul, as to One fully aware of our sufferings ; and to call to His remembrance the scenes in the desert, the wants and weaknesses of a human body ; and to feel certain that He knows the degree of grace we require, and that knowing our nature, He will never allow Satan to succeed in the end over one of the sheep of His fold. And here is our encouragement to pray : since He to whom we pray was tempted like as we are, “let us come boldly to the throne of grace ;” He is “touched with a feeling of our infirmities ;” He knows the nature of pain, and grief, and weakness, not only from His knowledge as God, but from His experiences as man ; familiar with every suffering, He struggled under infirmity, and spent whole nights in solitary prayer.

And perhaps no single expression so completely shews to us His power to feel with us, as that title which long stood written on the prophetic page, —“The Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” All this experience He still remembers. When He passed into the heavens as High Priest over God’s household, He carried with Him all the sympathies by which His heart had been opened on earth : He is the same kind, gentle, compassionate, and faithful Friend now as He was then. Christian, oh consider what encouragement you have to pray ! Are you oppressed, are you discouraged, wearied, unworthy, defiled, inconstant, ungrateful, and full of doubts ? are you low and vile in your own esteem ? and do the sorrows of life oppress you ? Still remember Jesus : His blood has flowed for your sin, His righteousness is your claim to honour and glory. His love cannot change, nor His knowledge of your case become obscure or less by time. He knows all, He feels all, He will suffer all : no human idea can imagine the mighty mystery of His love. Be ever a suppliant at His throne of grace. You are as much the object of His tender care as if you were His lone child in the universe of nature. Cast thy burden upon Him, and say, “The Lord is my Shepherd, and I shall not want.”

And again, when you think for the time that God has ceased to shed the light of His countenance upon you ; when earth seems dreary and the sky is dark ; when sorrows here drive the soul to God, and for a while heaven may seem as sorrowful as earth ; when God seems for a time to hide His face, and we are left alone, despised by man, and to all appearance forsaken by God ; oh, then remember, such was Jesus too, and be not by that discouraged. Think not the sun has hidden its face for ever. If God hid from His dear Son the glories of His face, and did it all that no cause of sorrow which might afflict the Christian, might not also be found in the tale of his Redeemer's sufferings, oh, surely encouraging, and we may yet expect the light again from heaven, and the assurance still that, as was Jesus, so are we God's own beloved children.

But there are trials for the body in which Christ can also feel with us. Are you poor ? Christ, too, was poor, and yet He wanted nothing more. Few were His wants, and few His comforts, while like you He was a traveller on earth. Are you in pain or sickness ? Christ, too, was a Man of grief ; on His brow the thorny crown was laid, and through His hands and feet the soldiers' nails. Are you suffering from want of friends,

and do you feel deserted and alone, or is life to you a dreary solitude? He, too, had but few friends, and even they, in the trying hour, all forsook Him and fled. Have you to suffer from want or distress, while thousands around you sail down the tide without a ruffle, and pass you unheeded and neglected by? Who of the rulers or the great of this world glanced, save with scorn, at the despised Nazarene, whose wants were known to few, and told to none? and yet He was not alone, for His Father was with Him.

Oh! if such were Jesus, if such His trials, how can you complain? Surely, that thought were enough to make us cheerful in life's bitterest hours, to know that not a tear but what He sheds it with you; not a sorrow, but He has borne it too.

β. And not only has He borne it all, but borne it without a murmur; surely setting us an example in every situation of trial and difficulty. He has taught us what submission is; for when He was insulted He threatened not, nor reviled in return. What was His resource in the moment of temptation and mental suffering? He went to His Father—to Him who is "His Father and our Father, His God and our God." When the world rejected Him and man despised Him, He

did not turn sickened away, and wish to lie down and die, but retired to prayer; He knew His work was not yet done, which His Father had given Him to do, and till He called Him, He was ready to stay. When man forsook Him, He knew the right source of comfort was intercourse with His Father in moments of retired prayer. And again, when loaded with the heaviest insults, how meek His answers, and how large His love; though tried to the last point of human endurance, yet forgiveness was His latest thought, and suffering obedience His latest act.

Do you never repine? When earth seems dreary to you, and when your little plans in life are disappointed, do you never wish your years drawn to their close, and your pilgrimage done? Do you never, with a fancied devotion of spirit, *express* yourself satisfied to bear *everything*, while you *shew* yourself willing to bear *nothing*? When tempted, do you never feel inclined to give the whole matter up, and in despair let the wave of temptation flow down how and when it will? Are you not inclined to say, "I have striven against temptation until I am tired, I will strive no longer; I do not get the help I expected, I will give way after all?" Such did not Jesus;

His resource was always prayer, and His conduct cheerful obedience.

As He *with* you has borne your trials, so, *as* He did, bear yours ; and dwelling on His love, looking to Him as your nearest friend, remembering He intercedes for you in heaven,—that not a tear you shed drops unpitied by Him,—holding intercourse with Him in every trial, looking to Him in every temptation,—by night your refuge and by day your friend,—“ Come boldly to His throne of grace, that you may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need.”

SERMON II.

FOR QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

THE TEMPTATION.—No. I.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.—MATT. iv. 1.

WE are approaching the season called Lent. Next Wednesday begins the forty days which the Church in all ages has set apart to keep the sacred time.

The event in our Lord's life generally referred to this period is His temptation in the wilderness, which I therefore purpose, with God's blessing, considering during the next few Sundays.

Before I enter on this consideration, however, I would make a few remarks on the season of Lent, to which we are so nearly approaching.

It is to be regretted that so many of those seasons appointed to be kept by our Church are now well-nigh unknown and neglected, and men look with a feeling amounting to astonish-

ment and suspicion when you tell them that Lent is a season in which they ought *to fast*. But so it is; and though but ill received, it is still our duty, at least, to enforce some acts of self-denial through the sacred season. I do not say that it is possible to lay down any very particular rules about the exact mode of this kind of denial and abstinence; *that* must, to a great degree, be left to the judgment and powers of the individual himself. It appears that from the earliest time it has been the custom of the Church to appoint and keep, at this season, a fast of forty days. It is believed that the custom of holding a fast of some kind was the practice, at this season, of the apostles themselves. The chief reasons for having selected forty days as the number of the days of fasting, seem to have been that our Lord fasted forty days in the desert; that Moses was forty days fasting; in forty days God drowned the world; forty years the children of Israel were punished in the wilderness; Elijah fasted forty days; the Ninevites had forty days given them for repentance; and forty stripes was the appointed number for malefactors. For these reasons, and most especially the fact of its being the duration of our Lord's fasting, the number of forty days has

been fixed on by the Church as the length of the great fast of the year.

One more reason has been given,—that as it seems a sacred law to give up the tenth of our goods to God, so we should deny ourselves a tenth part of the year, and give our time and substance through that period to the service of religion, and the forty days of Lent.

It is not my object at this moment to dwell on the subject of fasting, or to give the arguments in favour of it at length. The principal briefly are,—

1. Our Lord's remark to the disciples, that when He, the Bridegroom, was taken away, then should they fast; on which account the ancient Christians very particularly observed as a fast the three days in which their Lord was taken away, and lay in the grave.

2. The directions our Lord gives about the manner of our fasting, which He would surely not have given, did He not consider it a duty; more especially as they come close upon His similar directions with regard to prayer and almsgiving.

3. The example of our Lord Himself, since He seems to have fasted, as I will presently shew, for the purpose of preparing Himself, as a human being, for the work of His sacred office.

4. The example of most good and holy men in Scripture, such as Daniel, David, St. Paul, and others.

5. Which was done by them, as it should be done by us, for the purpose of giving up our time to prayer, and religious devotions, and mourning for those sins which made God's Holy Spirit grieve.

With respect to the manners in which Christians fasted, they were very various. Some were in the habit of abstaining from food altogether; some of taking only less pleasant food than usual; some by fasting up to a certain hour; but all agreed in making a great difference in their mode of living through the forty days of Lent, and most especially observing the fast strictly on Ash-Wednesday and Good-Friday. In public, no shows, sights, games, or amusements were anywhere allowed, and everything wore the appearance of sorrow and humiliation. During Passion-week no criminals were allowed to be executed, slaves were released from their bondage, and works of charity were publicly performed.

I will close these remarks on fasting by quoting the words of an old writer of the Church, in which he points out the *true* nature of a fast; which, if we do not mend our life and morals, if

it have no influence on our daily conduct, is of little use :—"It was usual in Lent for the people to ask each other how many weeks they had fasted ; and one would answer, he had fasted two weeks, another three, another all. And what advantage is it, if we have kept the fasting without mending our morals ? If another say, I have fasted the whole of Lent, say thou, I had an enemy, and I am reconciled to him ; I had a custom of reviling, and have left it off ; I was used to swearing, and have broken the evil habit. It is of no advantage to fast, if our fasting do not produce such fruits as these." And again he says : "Let no one place his confidence in fasting alone, if he continue in his sins without reforming. It may be, one that fasts not at all may obtain pardon, if he has the excuse of bodily infirmity ; but he that does not correct his sins can have no excuse. Thou hast not fasted, by reason of the weakness of thy body,—but why art thou not reconciled to thine enemies*?"

Thus it is plainly a duty to fast, especially in the season of Lent, a time always selected for it by the Church of Christ. And in fasting, we are to remember it is of no use, save as a means to

* Chrys. Hom. xvi. ad P. A.,

bring us nearer to God ; and if we do not correct our morals, fasting is of no avail whatever.

I shall not now dwell any longer on the subject of fasting, or the season of Lent. I should recommend the keeping of Ash-Wednesday and Good-Friday as days of abstinence, in order to devote our time and thoughts to prayer, and the consideration of our sins. Passion-week should also be kept as a season of great humiliation, not because Christ died, for that is cause of joy, but because of our sins, which made Him die. The Thursday before Good-Friday, commonly called Maundy Thursday, from a Latin word signifying *command*, from our Lord's having instituted and commanded the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is a day also to be observed with especial sanctity.

II. I will now proceed to examine further our Lord's temptation, the season of His life to which at this time we are particularly called to the consideration of. "For in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted."

“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit^b.” In the first eleven verses of this chapter are recorded the various temptations of Christ, and in them there are three points to consider:—

1. The preparation for the temptation, in the first and second verses; 2. the temptation itself, from ver. 3 to 10; 3. the source and result of the temptation, in the eleventh.

1. The first part we may divide into two: *a.* the going forth into the wilderness; *β.* the abode in the wilderness.

a. “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil.”

1. “*Then was Jesus led.*” We mark here *the time when*. In the last verses of the preceding chapter we find mentioned the baptism of our Lord in the river Jordan by St. John the Baptist, and His baptism was honoured by a voice from heaven, and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Him; and by His baptism being filled with the Holy Ghost, and empowered to preach, and teach, and heal, He is immediately led up to be tempted by the devil.

Now mark here, Christ is *no sooner baptized than He is tempted*; and Christ is our great example: therefore we learn that the moment

^b Matt. iv. 1.

we His people are given to Christ by baptism, that moment we must expect to be tempted; and the more we give ourselves to Him, the more we shall be tempted. If you resolve, by the help of God, to avoid sin,—if you strive to overcome temper,—if you aim at reaching eternal glory, that moment Satan will do his best to work your ruin. And again, especially if you give up your besetting sin, to that you will be particularly tempted. If a thief give up his thieving, Satan will assail his honesty most; if a liar give up lying, his love of truth will be hard tried. If you have an ill-temper, and strive to give it up, you will be most tried in your temper.

Thus we learn from this, that in this point Christ was tempted like as we are; because the moment He was baptized He was led away to be tempted.

2. We may mark, secondly, that our Lord was tempted immediately before entering upon His public ministry; from which we learn this lesson: if we are placed in any office of power, or influence, or instruction of others, Satan will most particularly direct his attacks upon us. If a man be a minister of God, the father of a family, an elder brother, a teacher in a school, an employer of workmen, a master of servants,—if,

in short, he occupy any position in which he is looked up to, and able to guide or influence others, that moment he is most attacked by Satan, because he sees that if he can effect such a man's downfall, he effects with him the downfall of many others.

We may take examples from the Bible for this.

1. The moment Moses was chosen as the guide of the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt, he was tempted by Satan to commit an error, and to fly from the face of the Egyptian^c.

2. And David was no sooner appointed by God to be king of Israel, but he was persecuted by Saul.

3. As soon as our Lord called His disciples to their sacred office, He constrained them to go on to the Sea of Galilee, and then let the storm and wind be raised upon their vessel till they were compelled to cry out, "Master, save us, or we perish."

Oh, are you aware of this? are you considering how vigilant Satan is for your ruin, if you are likely to be looked up to by others? do you consider the ruin you create by your downfall? Oh, do I speak to a father or mother of a family? do I speak to a master or an employer of work-

^c Exod. ii. 14.

men? do I speak to an elder brother or sister of a family? Do you consider the immense consequence of your consistence, the ruin you bring on those who look up to you by your falling into temptation? Learn, from the example of Christ, how quick Satan will be particularly to attack *you*: for “He was in all points tempted like as you are, yet without sin.”

And let us mark, in the next place, the *reason* why God does thus see fit to try those of us who are placed in authority; or why He permits them to be thus tempted.

1. He does it to shew them their great weakness, because they of all others require to know this.

2. He does it to bring them more frequently near Him in love, and prayer, and patience; and also by their conspicuous position gives an opportunity for their graces to be shewn. There is an old saying on this head, and true as it is old: “Reading, meditation, prayer, and temptation,—these four make a Christian.”

These two things, then, we may learn from our Lord’s being tempted immediately after His baptism,—“*Then* was He led:” that we, as following His example in what we suffer as well as what we do, are assailed by Satan when we once

begin the open profession of religion, and more particularly when entering on any office of influence or importance.

3. The next point we have to remark is *the mode of His being led up*, or the cause which moved Him to go. The leading of the Spirit, as in St. Mark's Gospel: "He was carried apart," not by a *forced*, but by a willing movement. It was not a forced movement of the body, like that of Elijah, or Philip from the eunuch; but by the inward instinct of the Holy Ghost. He was made willing, and moved to go (*ηγερο*). Thus Christ guides the Spirit and is guided by it,—the one as God, the other as man.

1. We learn here the implicit obedience which Christ as man paid to God the Holy Spirit; He was wholly guided by Him in everything. If, then, He be our example, and as in all points we are tempted like Him; so in all points we are supported to act like Him: if we suffer as Christians what He suffered, and act, as Christians, as He acted, we too should be led and guided wholly by the same Spirit. "When Thou sayest, Seek ye My face, my heart answered to Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek^d."

2. We learn from Christ's being led of the

^d Ps. xxvii. 8.

Spirit away to temptation, that no temptation comes by chance, nor yet by the devil's will and appointment; for he could not touch Job, nor anything that he had, till God had given him leave to do it. As God had decreed that he who had overcome all mankind should be overcome by Christ, so He has appointed this fight by temptation for all men. The place where it is tried is the world; the soldiers of the conflict are those who love the Lord Jesus Christ; the great adversary with whom we fight is Satan; those who look on are men and angels; the Judge is God Himself, so that the end of it shall be good. Therefore when we are tempted, we must not think it strange, but rather count it exceeding joy; for temptation tries our faith, and the trial of our faith worketh patience.

3. We learn from Christ's being "led of the Spirit," that we are not to cast ourselves heedlessly into the way of temptation. There is enough temptation to wrong about us without our throwing ourselves into the way of it; there is enough in our own bad hearts, our family circle, our daily employment, to lead and lure us into sin, without casting ourselves into the way of it heedlessly. In *trials* this is particularly the case. Thus many a martyr was to blame for

heedlessly rushing into the flames of death before there was manifest need and guidance from God for his death. No; we are not to run ourselves into temptations or into trials, but resist and bear those we are compelled to undergo; and that will be enough work for us till we reach heaven. Thus we have no right to mix with company who do not fear God, trusting to our being strong enough to resist and bear temptation, for it is seldom we shall carry more good *to* them than evil *from* them. “He that walketh with the wise shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be like unto them*.”

4. We are struck with this: when Christ came out into His public office, He was not only especially tempted of the devil, but especially guided by the Spirit. We always have a grace sufficient for our day: if our work for God be great, our gifts to help us from God will be great too. Jesus had the Spirit when He disputed with the doctors, but He had it more abundantly when He came forth to preach in the wilderness. Our strength is proportioned to our wants and our temptations; and if we do not find we have greater grace, depend on it it is our own fault,—we do not use what we have got.

* Prov. xiv. 20.

There will be a grace in a dying hour more abundant than the grace offered to help the first dawn of childhood's religion ; there will be a grace to bear up against the storms of advancing life, greater than that given us when we have nothing to do but to believe and hope ; there will be a grace given us when we are called upon to teach and guide, more than that given us when we have but to learn and follow. As a man, Christ had greater supply of God's Spirit at His temptation, than when He taught the doctors in His infant years ; "and in all things it behoved Him to be tempted like as we are." He was our example ; and as it was with Him, so it will be with us : in every increasing difficulty of life, in every increasing responsibility, in every new trial, in every situation of peculiar sorrow, doubt, and difficulty, God's grace is sufficient for us, for His strength is made perfect in our weakness.

But now, having examined the second point I mentioned,—the cause of Christ's going up to be tempted, the moving of God's Spirit,—which shews us, 1. that we too should follow His guidance ; 2. that no trial or temptation comes by chance ; 3. that we are not to seek temptation ; and, 4. that for every temptation we shall

have a grace equal to it,—I will defer to another day the consideration of the *place of temptation*, and the *tempter* ; parts of his preparation for the attack we will afterwards consider.

How consoling to know that in all points like as we are, Christ was tempted. I cannot be speaking to one, however young, who is at all anxious to serve God, who does not know what temptation is. It has been, it is, it will be, your bitterest trial to your dying day. Temptation will trouble you when you rise in the morning, when you try to pray, when you open God's Word, when you kneel at God's altar, when you come to church, when you would be better, holy, devoted, good, and serious ; then will temptation take you, and if you do not strive against it, it will ruin you.

Do you strive hard against it ? If you conquer, it shall do you good at last ; it shall try your faith, and draw you near to God.

There are many ways you have to resist and weaken it. Daily prayer will give you strength ; do you neglect this ? then no wonder you are tempted. Daily study of God's Word will tell you where your strength lies ; do you neglect this ? then no wonder you are tempted. Self-examination will shew you how much you have

to correct, what harm temper has already done; do you neglect this? then no wonder temptation is strong. There is one more thing yet, one more means most peculiarly suited to give you strength against the tempter—the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; do you neglect this? Oh how many are condemned! There is something in this that particularly helps us; it gives us Christ to feed on; it brings Christ to our mind; it comes often and calls us to our spirituality; it brings us often to the Cross; it fills us often with the Spirit; it reminds us often of sin. Oh why do you neglect this? Why, when you *are* so bad, so weak, so wicked, why do you turn away from that which would strengthen you? Why do you so systematically refuse the free, abundant offers of your Redeemer, made to you through this most blessed Sacrament? Oh perhaps you little know the consequences; perhaps you little calculate how you will have cause to repent these neglected sacraments at the judgment-day, when Christ tells you, "I called to you, and ye did not answer." Perhaps you have not considered the matter enough, or thought what the consequences of your neglect will be. May be this is your reason for staying away; it is that you do not care for it, or on principle re-

fuse it ; and it would be a dreadful thing to refuse on principle what Christ has ordered you to receive.

Some of you, I trust, will come to-day ; some of you who know what it is to be tempted will come for grace at the sacramental table. May you come earnestly repenting of past sin, in love, charity, and forgiveness with all mankind ; sincerely intending to lead, as far as your conscience directs you, a new, a better, and a holier life ; and you come prepared. Look to Christ through it all, He will give you strength, pardon, peace, encouragement, hope.

SERMON III.

THE TEMPTATION.—No. II.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.—MATT. vi. 1.

THE place of our Lord's temptation was the wilderness. What wilderness this was is not exactly known ; some think it was the wilderness between Jerusalem and Jericho, in which the man aided by the good Samaritan fell among thieves ; or it may have been the desert where Elias fasted forty days, which was near Arabia ; and where the children of Israel wandered forty years. Our Lord seems to have chosen it as the place of His temptation on account of its being more suited to His extreme state of humiliation, to which the desert was more suited than the city of Jerusalem, and was also better calculated to make His victory over Satan more triumphant, from the extreme solitude and friendlessness of the place, where He could have no assistance from man, or any earthly source of help.

We find from the second verse that our Lord employed His time in *fasting* for the space of forty days and nights. The reason of His choosing this number of days seems to be that the number might agree with the fasts of Moses and Elias, the givers of the law, and the prophets, who entered on their public ministry with a fast of forty days. His reason for fasting no longer than they may have been the danger there might then have been of men doubting His humanity, or being at all fashioned as a man. Our Lord's hunger, the result of His fasting, was felt and borne by Him in order to know the sufferings of human beings from infirmities of the same description, and also to establish the truth of His humanity.

Having thus touched on the smaller circumstances attendant on His temptation, we will now proceed to examine the temptation itself.

I. The sacred voice from heaven had died away, the work of baptism was over, and, led by the moving of the Spirit, the friendless Son of Mary trod in solitude and silence the pathway to the desert. No human eye was fixed upon His movements, no earthly being sympathized with His sufferings. Though come to seek and to save the lost, to heal the sick and raise the dead, to

pour in the balm of comfort to the wounded hearts of sin and sorrow, still He was neglected by those He came to save, and despised by the very men for whom He suffered. He had left the house of Mary; all her maternal love did not keep Him there: He went about His Father's business; and now it was time to begin that, He must forget the comforts and affections of His earthly home. The wilderness was now His dwelling-place, the barren wilds and dreary solitudes must now be the resting-place of the Son of God. But it was to do His Father's will, and to bless mankind, and so He bore it without a murmur. That Father could be served in the desert as well as in the peopled town,—and He was content. Oh what a lesson,—what an example of patience and resignation! How little like this do we bear the afflicting hand of that God who was His God and our God, His Father and our Father!

He arrives at length in the depths of the desert. The howl of the wild beasts was around Him, and the rugged rock the only pillow where His head might rest; nothing on every side but desolation and solitude. How often must His thoughts have ascended to His Father's home, where angels worshipped Him whom man de-

spised. At length the tempter comes, hateful to every thought of one so holy as the Son of God. How much we learn from every movement of the tempter, and from every action of our blessed Lord!

a. It is worth remark that the devil came to Christ when He was hungry; he seized on the weakest moment of His flesh, when He was least able as a man to withstand his attacks. The forty days' fast had worn out His frame, and He was feeble, and, as a man, powerless. How exactly, then, do we see from this that our Lord was "tempted like as we are."

Satan attacks us in our weakest moments; he assaults us when the body is feeble, and consequently the spirit oppressed. In the hour of death, when the soul is about to take its flight; when we are alone, and without human friends to advise, encourage, and console us, then we are like Christ in the wilderness, and Satan makes his keenest attack upon us. Thank God if then you are tempted, "but without sin."

β. Not only did Satan attack Christ in the weakest moment, but on the *weakest point*. There was but one weak point which Jesus had open to the assaults of the evil one,—His human nature, His feeble body, His feelings as a man,—

and in this Satan seized Him. He could not sin; He had no inward inclination to do what Satan suggested; but He was subject to the weakness of a worn-out frame; here the tempter touched Him. Oh how exactly was Christ in this point tempted like as we are. Does not Satan attack us in our weakest point? How he suits his mode of temptation to the disposition of the victim. Are you vain? In how dazzling a lustre will he place the pleasures of this poor world before you! Are you ambitious? In what splendid honour will he make the great things of man appear! Are you discontented? In what exalted light will he place advantages of others before your eyes! Are you jealous? In what strong contrasts will he place the kindness of the person you love towards another than you! Are you of an ill temper? How he will make you think every body hates you, neglects you, despises you, or intends to slight you! Are you indolent? How wearisome will he make the slightest effort for another's good seem in your eyes! Are you too active? How useless will he make the quiet hour of prayer, and thought, and reading seem to you! He tempts us to what our nature is most inclined; he suits his allurements to our inclination. If we are of a quiet temper, h

will not tempt us *there* ; if we are only ambitious, he will not care to make us jealous ; if we are too active, he will not tempt us to be idle. He knows us well ; he drives our inclination to its far extreme. There was but one weak point in Christ ; that was His human nature, and there he tempted Him.

Christ “was in all points tempted like as we are.”

It is important to remember that there are two parties concerned in temptation,—Satan and ourselves. If we had no inclination, he would have no power ; it is our inward infirmity which gives him the hold within us. We must gradually strive to mortify and weaken self before we must hope to weaken Satan’s power.

II. Having then seen the preparation made by Christ for His temptation, and the reasons for it, as well as the time chosen by Satan for the attack, on the one part ; the selection of the time, immediately after baptism, to prepare Him for His public ministry, His being guided to His temptation by the Spirit of God, His going into the wilderness, and the approach of the tempter at the moment of His fasting and weakness, we will now proceed to the second great point, *His actual temptation*.

I will lay down certain broad rules with re-

gard to this temptation, and then examine each particularly.

I. Not one of the temptations is to be considered by itself, but as one of a kind or class of temptations. We gather this,—from the account given in Luke iv. 13, where we find, if we translate the words literally, that it means, “*Satan having finished every kind of temptation,*” not *the whole temptation*, which evidently intends that each temptation was meant to be a representative of a particular class or kind of temptation to which men are prone,—that Christ might be “tempted in all points like as we are.”

II. The first temptation is addressed to a natural appetite, a want of the body, and is meant to be a specimen of all the temptations we suffer from our bodily inclinations: such as to indolence, eating, drinking, lust, sloth, self-indulgence, and sensuality of any kind. The temptation was to eat, addressed to His feeling of hunger: thus was Christ’s first temptation as one of a class of sensual temptations; so that He was, with regard to the body, “tempted in all points like as we are.”

The second temptation, to throw Himself from the pinnacle, was addressed to the principle *of pride*, or was one of that kind of temptations

to which we are subject, where a love of display is shewn,—such as temptations to vanity, pride, dress, display, love of flattery, and admiration, doing things for the praise of man, not of God; and this forming a large class of temptations to which we are liable, our Lord was tempted to one of them, “yet without sin.”

The third temptation, to possess the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, was addressed to the principle of the love of wealth, power, and honour; in one of these points was Christ tempted, that He might be “*in all points* tempted like as we are.”

III. The order of the temptations is in order of their *strength*; they begin with their weakest, and go on to their strongest.

IV. The immediate cause of their first was the feeling of hunger; of the second, the voice at the baptism; of the third, the expectation of the Messias.

V. The subject of the first temptation was to discover if Christ were the Son of God; the object of the third, whether He were the true, or a false Christ; if He were a false pretender to be Christ, He would gladly have seized on the opportunity of gaining the kingdoms of the world, which the Jews expected would be the sign of

the Messias. The object of Satan in tempting Him was not only to try and lead Him into sin, but to convince himself whether He was the Son of God or no.

VI. We may compare the order of the temptations with the classification of impure desires given by St. John^a, seemingly with regard to our Lord's temptations, where he speaks of "the lust of the flesh, the lust (or desire) of the eye, and the pride of life." The desire of the flesh is the first temptation, to satisfy the desire of hunger; the desire of the eyes the second temptation, the eyes being attracted by show, pomp, and splendour; the pride of life the third, or a desire for vain-glory; but this holds good with St. Luke's order of the temptations, not St. Matthew's (ἀλαζονεία, vainglory^b.)

There are few subjects more difficult than to determine *how* our Lord was tempted, to reconcile the difficulties of the difference between His divine and human nature.

We will therefore now refer to each particular temptation of our Lord's, and discover the lessons we may learn from them.

When the tempter came to Christ, his first temptation was:—"If Thou be the Son of God,

^a 1 John ii. 16.

^b Aristot. Eth. Nic. iv. 7.

command that these stones be made bread." The main object of this temptation seems to have been to make Christ distrust His Father, to shake that principle in Him which made Him as man trust in God. The voice at the baptism seems to have been partly a reason of the choice of this temptation. If Christ had made the stones bread, He would have obeyed Satan and prevented God's will. Satan knew that if He were the Son of God He would not do it, and therefore tried to annoy Him by casting, if possible, a doubt over His mind: "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But Thou wilt (or canst) not, therefore Thou art not."

How often Satan tries in the same way to shake the faith and trust of believers which they have reposed in God! How fond a temptation is it of his to make us doubt if God be for us at all! How often he says to us,—“If thou wert the son of God thou wouldest not be so unhappy, or so inconsistent, or so wavering.”

But this first temptation was perhaps an appeal to His hungry state of body, as I said above; and thus Satan tried, through the inclination or want created in our Lord's human nature, to tempt Him to obey him and prevent God. Thus there may have been two appeals made to Christ

in this temptation,—to His trust in His Father, and to His bodily wants as a human being.

There must in every temptation, to make it a temptation, be an *inward principle*, and an *outward opportunity*. In the present instance Satan appealed to an inward principle in Christ,—*human*, but *not sinful*,—*the principle of hunger*, against which our Lord strove by His submission to His Father's will. The devil hoped to find a principle of distrust in God, but did not, and consequently in this object was thwarted.

And now, you are often tempted in this point too: tempted through the want of the body to sin against God; tempted by the desire of the flesh to intemperance, inordinate indulgence, lust, uncleanness, indolence, &c.; i. e. Satan makes use of these feelings in you to draw you by them into sin. Do you not find it so? is it not true? But let us proceed to examine our Lord's answer to the tempter.

There are three things to mark here.

1. "*And He answering said.*" Here we are struck with the perfect power and readiness of Christ to answer the tempter. There was no delay, no doubt; He had the full power and will to answer.

If, then, Christ could thus answer Satan so

immediately in the depth of His humiliation, how much more can He, and will He answer their temptations for those who trust in Him, now that He is exalted to His Father's throne again !

2. "*It is written.*" We are struck here with the mode of His answer, He appeals to the written word of God ; He might have called to His aid twelve legions of angels, but He chose the simple power of the Word of God. And mark the mercy that led Him to do this : He did it for our example, that we might have the means of answering the assaults of Satan, to teach us that the best answer is the Word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit ; that this is the best to quench all the fiery darts of Satan.

How important, then, to know well the Word of God ! How should we be so read in its blessed commandments that we may all have an answer ready for Satan ! And yet how few of us are ! We read it as a dead letter ; we take no interest in it ; it does not touch our affections or convert our understanding ; we take it up to fulfil an irksome duty, or to salve over an unquiet conscience.

3. "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*" This answer is taken from Deut. viii. 3, where Moses shews the Israelites, who were

driven to want and had nothing to eat, that the Lord fed them with manna to teach them that man does not live alone by bread, but by every word of God.

Bread here intends the supply of every want of the body, food, raiment, and so forth ; our Lord intends that we are not to look to these for support, independent of the will of God. If it were God's will to fast, we should and could fast ; if it were God's will to be satisfied with only a particular kind of food, that should and could be our support and sufficiency. Sometimes God orders man to live by ordinary means, sometimes with only some of them, sometimes without them for a while at all, as in the case of Elias and Moses ; and sometimes against them, as in the case of Daniel in the lions' den, and the three children in the furnace. Whatever means God appoints is sufficient, and we should be satisfied.

Our Lord's particular answer for His own case meant this : " You say no man can live without bread, therefore I must make it. I answer your temptation by saying I need not make it, and yet it need not be, (not that I *cannot*) but because man need not always live by bread ; there are times when man is commanded not to live by bread ; that time is now Mine, and God's

word and will is more welcome to Me than the want of My human nature.”

We, then, must not live by the supply of wants of the body alone ; we, too, must acknowledge God in it all ; we must remember all we hold of comforts is from His hand, and at His bidding we must give them up, as at His bidding we now hold them. Your life consisteth not in the thing you possess ; your soul, your happiness, your all, hang not on the poor enjoyment of a failing body, on the indulgence of the flesh, that so soon will be past indulgence ; but your happiness rests in doing His will, and living to His glory.

We will examine the remainder of the temptation on a future occasion. For the present, may the example of Christ be your guide in the hour of your temptation, the moment of your trial ; He is your *all*, your Redeemer, your Example, your Intercessor and Advocate. Cling to Him and His cross, and thus only you will be happy. There is a shell whose inhabitant clings the tighter to the rock from which it sprung, from every effort which is made to tear it away. Let that be your example, and only hold the closer to Him for every trial and temptation that would tear you away. Strive to have your mind like His mind, your conduct in every

difficulty like His, your highest honour the shame of His cross, your surest, happiest hope, His promises.

Once more, then. Why will you not receive the Sacrament as a remedy against temptation? You say you are not fit; what *is* to make you fit, except the very temptations under which you suffer, and from which you wish to be free? Is not *that* a sufficient fitness? Are you going to wait till you are free from sin, till temptation does not assail or trouble you? If that time *ever come*—though God knows it never will—of what use would the Sacrament then be to you? It is for the wicked, for the guilty, for the weak, and for the unhappy; and all *that* you are. Then it is *for you*. You will never be free from sin till your mortal has put on its immortality; never this side eternity; so it is no use waiting for that. And surely Christ would never have ordered *that* to be received for which no one would be ever fit; it were a mockery to think it. Remember who they were to whom He gave it; there was Peter who denied Him, Judas who betrayed Him, all, who forsook Him; you are not worse than they; then why should you not receive it?

SERMON IV.

THE TEMPTATION.—No. III.

Then the devil taketh Him up into the holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down : for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee : and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them ; and saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then Jesus saith unto him, Get thee hence, Satan : for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.

MATTHEW iv. 5—10.

Few things are more delightful, encouraging, comforting, than Christian intercourse, when we find others suffering from the same trials, the same temptations, difficulties, and drawbacks that we do ourselves.

It shews us that we have not been worse than others ; it reminds us of the difficulties which we *must expect* ; that if they escaped safely through it all, we may surely hope the same ; —the same grace to aid us, the same Spirit to

guide us, the same Saviour to pardon us, the same God to love us, the same heaven to give us rest at last.

But most especially is this our comfort when that fellow-sufferer is Jesus Christ Himself; when in our trials, our sufferings, our difficulties, above all, our temptations, He, too, was like us. Follow Him into all the stages of His earthly career, we find His sympathy still. Are you in sorrow for the dead or dying? Bethany saw the grief of Jesus, the tomb of Lazarus was moistened with His tear. Are you worn with toil and labour? The well of Samaria was the resting-place of Christ, and on the wave of Gennesaret was His pillow. Are you in pain and sickness? The cross of Calvary and the crown of thorns witnessed His anguish too. Are you desolate, deserted, friendless? He, too, was forsaken in Gethsemane, betrayed in the garden by the very familiar friend whom He had trusted. Are you in doubt of mind, in anxiety on religion? He thought He was forsaken of God, and bent in agony beneath His bitter prospect. Are you despised, neglected, forgotten? "He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" He moved an unheeded stranger through the city street or the village

lane, the object of scorn and derision, the laughing-stock of the learned, and the contempt of the proud. Are you poor? His birthplace was the village inn, His resting-place He knew not where, His friends the fishermen of Galilee, His place of resort the mountain, His haunt the chamber of sickness and the home of want:—"He was poor, yet making many rich." Above all,—your keenest, bitterest trial,—*are you tempted?* In the wilderness the tempter came to Him, and tempted Him in all points like as you are. Thus His love is beyond human love. He is the Friend of sinners in a way above all others,—the Son of Man, and the Son of God.

I. We have already considered the first temptation, we will now proceed to examine the second.

"Then the devil taketh Him up into the holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone."

Satan could not succeed in the wilderness, so he conveys our Lord to the city. How he conveyed our Lord thither—a question which has employed

some persons' minds—matters very little; we find Him carried to a pinnacle of the temple. This temptation is given by St. Luke before the other, but St. Matthew attends throughout more strictly to the order of events than St. Luke.

a. Before I proceed, let me point out another instance of similarity between our Lord's temptations and ours. Satan is no sooner conquered in one assault than he makes another; he is never tired, and if we rest from our watchfulness for an hour under the idea that we have conquered him, he will take advantage of our indolence, and undo us before we are aware. He will appear in some new light to our souls, and often make us think we are treading the path of duty, when we are in fact going to destruction. For example, he may have sorely tempted you to one sin,—let us say to jealousy; you have struggled against it, and by God's grace overcome it; you have been able, more than once, to suppress it. This gives you courage; you think the sin that lately beset you is now silenced. You do not perceive that Satan has only changed his ground; he has gone from the wilderness to the temple. He has been defeated in making you jealous, but he is just succeeding in making you self-satisfied and vain. He has only changed

his ground; he dares continue with the same temptation after a defeat, for he knows you will be aware of him. He is an ever-watchful enemy. It would be well were you as little tired of praying as he of tempting.

But to proceed with the nature of our Lord's temptation: "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down." He here tempts Him to impose on God's providence, as in the last temptation he had tempted Him to distrust it. He wished to make Him display the care of God for Him by casting Himself heedlessly and needlessly on His mercy and care. He tempted Him to prove His Sonship by this act of presumption on God's care. But he failed. Our Lord had no inclination to obey Satan in this particular. The only inclination He might have had was to cast Himself away from the close neighbourhood in which He stood to so hateful and horrible a being as Satan, which so narrow and small a space as the pinnacle of the temple must have brought Him into.

Satan, then, here wished to persuade Christ to presume on God's mercy, to bring Him to a vain confidence on His Father's protection without using lawful means. And in this point we are tempted like Christ was.


We find sometimes a poor sinner living utterly neglectful of every single duty, of every single means of grace, of every single effort of giving up sin ; the Sabbath passing without an attempt to come to church ; the Bible unknown, the Sacrament neglected entirely ; sin habitually, wilfully, and knowingly committed and indulged in ; and, after all, what does Satan urge that poor guilty sinner to trust to ? ask him, and he will tell you,—*the mercy of God* ; the uncovenanted, unpromised, unconditional mercy of God, which he never cared for, honoured, or obeyed. Oh ! this is a wild temptation of Satan, to make such poor sinners trust to the veriest shadow mortal ever trusted to, and vainly presume to hope in a mercy they have no right whatever to trust in. This is a temptation to presume on God's mercy without the use of lawful means.

Or again. Some will tell us they are elect ; let them do ill, they *must* go to heaven ; let them do well, if they be elect to it they must still be lost. The former of whom are vainly trusting and presuming on a mercy of God, for which there is no warrant in Scripture whatever, which they are tempted to do by the same tempter, who on that point tempted our Lord Jesus Christ.

This, then, was the nature of the second temptation, and in this way does it affect us, and His case resembles ours.

The two first temptations represent the two great divisions of temptation to which Satan leads us,—presumption or security, and despair. Despair kills its thousands, and presumption its tens of thousands; the one makes us doubt what should really be our hope; the other makes us trust to what contains no hope at all. If Satan fails of one, he tries the other. And this reminds me to mention one more fact with regard to temptation; not only does Satan, if conquered in one temptation, try another; but he generally tries exactly the opposite. If he tempts you to ambition, and fails, he will often shift his ground and tempt you to little exertion, from the alarm you had taken, and the guilt of your exertion from a wrong motive. If he fails in tempting you to despair, he will try to tempt you to presume.

The particular suggestion of the temptation reminds us of the frequent desire of wicked men to desire signs and wonders, or they will not believe: "Cast Thyself down." So Herod desired to see a miracle of Christ before he would be satisfied. It is a harder thing to believe, and to act upon belief, than upon sight. "For it is



written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee : and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.” Here we find Satan, as it were, imitating Christ’s mode of address, and trying to succeed better by the quotation of God’s written word. He quotes the ninety-first Psalm. He imagined he should entrap our Lord’s humanity by resting his suggestions on the Bible ; and in doing this it is remarkable to observe his cunning, for he leaves out the sentence of the Psalm, verses 11, 12, which explain the passage,—*To keep Thee in all Thy ways*,—and by placing it as he does with the quotation of “*for*,” he makes it appear that the promise was written for this very occasion. And it is also worth remarking, that Satan seems to have failed in his good judgment in the choice of this passage, and to have foiled his own temptation, since the very passage of Scripture he quotes is immediately followed by the verse which, remembered by our Lord, and brought to mind by Satan’s quotation, would give Him strength against the tempter : “Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder,”—the two representatives of Satan in Scripture. Thus Satan forgot our Lord’s knowledge of God’s Word.

And now, how exactly in these points was our Lord tempted like as we are. First, Satan quotes Scripture to us, while he leaves out the very sentences which destroy the whole point for which he quotes it. When, for example, he tempts the godless sinner who is unwilling to turn from the gross error of his ways, he will let him think of some verse which speaks of the mercy of God, and shut out of his memory those which speak of His justice and His law ; he will remind him that God is *a Saviour*, but leave out the very part of the verse which destroys the force of his argument : “ He is a just God,” too, “ and will by no means clear the guilty ;” “ Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool :” but never reminds him that “ without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” He reminds him of the dying thief pardoned, as a reason for the delay of repentance ; but not Pharaoh, hardened by his refusal of opportunity and warning. Thus, as with our Lord, so with us ; he puts one passage of Scripture into our minds, making us forget, or altogether exclude by deceit and dishonesty, the very sentence which alters his meaning. We should know Scripture well. The meaning of the passage in the Psalms

is to express God's care over His people Israel, and that when He sent any trouble upon them, He would Himself protect them.

β. "Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Our Lord again goes to Scripture, shewing that when the wicked abuse Scripture they are to be answered by Scripture*. Our Lord's answer is from Deut. vi. 16: "Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God, as ye tempted Him at Massah." From which we may gather the exact meaning of tempting God, and our Lord's intention here.

1. To tempt God is to prove or make trial whether God be such as the Bible reports Him to be; if He be so great, so merciful, and good. Thus, "Your fathers tempted Me, and proved Me in the desert."

2. It is to make a needless and useless trial of it when we have no need, for curiosity's sake, or for presumption's sake, or to consume it on our lusts; and in this sense our Lord intended it here.

3. And, thirdly, He is tempted by man's distrust and unbelief.

So then to tempt God is to make needless

* Neh. viii. 9.

and unnecessary trial and experience of His goodness, power, and truth, proceeding from a distrusting heart.

1. God is tempted when men appoint their own time and manner of receiving mercies, as when Israel said, "Can He give us meat also, or prepare flesh for His people?" intending a doubt from His delay.

2. God is tempted when men will not believe without signs; as when Pharaoh demanded a sign.

3. God is tempted when men live in sin without repentance.

4. He is tempted when men refuse the ordinary means of grace, and of gaining God's help; as in this case, when Satan tempted Christ to use false and needless means to gain God's help. Thus we learn that we must not impose on God; we must not needlessly run into danger of body or soul; we must use the grace and help God gives us for the lawful employment of our temporal or spiritual calling; and then, in all our difficulties and dangers, He will make a way for us to escape; He will give His angels charge concerning us, lest at any time we dash our foot against a stone.

γ. We will pass on to the third temptation.

“ Again, the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them ; and saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me.”

Satan probably shewed all this in a vision, and acted toward Christ as he has done to many, by placing objects of desire before the eyes, and then leading on from admiration to desire, from desire to unlawful possession. Thus he let Eve first look at the apple, before she was persuaded to eat it. And so it is ever ; we are *by degrees* tempted to sin ; the look goes before, and leads to the action. As in the first temptation Satan tried to make Christ distrust His Father, and in the second presume upon Him, so now he tempts Him to idolatry,—to worship *him*.

He offers to give to Christ what was already His own. He knew if Christ were a mere man He would willingly seize on the offer, in order to establish His claims to being the Messiah ; and the accepting the devil's offer would at once have determined that He was not the Messiah.

With the same vain and glittering promises does Satan often tempt us ; he makes us believe we shall have in his service what *we* can never

possess, what *he* can never give us. And yet, deluded by his vain offer, how many pursue the course he places before them ; hoping for a glory, a pleasure, a world, they lose the end !

The condition of this promise was the *worship of Satan*. It seems scarcely possible, at first sight, that any can positively worship Satan ; and yet how many do ! Who sits and rules in the heart of the profane ? Is it the God whose name he insults, or the devil he pleases ? Who reigns in the heart of the profligate ? Is it the God whose purity he hates, or the devil whose nature is impure ? Who reigns in the heart of the worldly ? Is it God, whose seriousness they shun, or the devil, who bids them “ laugh now ? ” Who reigns in the heart of the liar ? Is it the God who is the God of truth, or the devil, the “ father of lies ? ” Who reigns in the heart of the Sabbath-breaker ? Is it the God whose day he hates, or the devil, who hates the day ? All these *worship the devil*, if doing what he tells them, and following his every wish, and word, and inclination, is worship and obedience. All these *worship Satan*, for a few hours’ gaiety in this sinful world, for a few vile passions, for a few glittering trifles, for a few empty treasures, which will all vanish at the grave, and fly before

them as witnesses to appear against them at the judgment-day.

“Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan : for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.”

These words are taken from Deut. vi. 13. They are not quoted exactly, as our Lord inserts the word “only.” But we may explain it by saying that Christ and His apostles, in alleging Scripture, often slightly deviate from the letter to give the full sense of Scripture ; and Christ Himself often expounds a quoted passage of Scripture by words inserted by Himself.

God, His law, His character, His word, His will, we must worship, obey, and supremely love, and these alone. Oh how hard to learn this ! how hard to tear ourselves from this poor world and its empty allurements ! how hard to place God in our hearts, and let Him reign there over all ! But we must, if we would be His.

The temptation is now over. Satan was foiled at every point ; the last was the sternest reproof, “Get thee hence.” Christ in His temptation is our example ; we, too, must in the same way resist him with indignation. “Resist the devil, and he will flee from thee.” We must resist him perseveringly, we must resist him from the Word

of God, we must resist him firmly, we must resist him wholly, we must give him no ground, and the temptation will be over soon, and then the devil will leave us,—never perhaps wholly, till the last breath is drawn,—but his efforts will be weaker, his success each time less. He is now bent upon your ruin, he is anxious to ruin you ; oh let him not succeed : “ Greater is He that is for you than he that is against you.” But mark, in St. Luke’s account, he left Him but “ for a season.” On the bitter cross, in the garden agony, *there* he was again. He came again,—he grieved His holy spirit ; but it passed away,—it was the last throb, the last effort of a ruined foe.

So shall it be with you ; though you defeat him, as pray God you may, *now*, at the hour of death, by your weakened body, by your languid spirit, at your departing moment, he may be *there* ; he may press you hard, he may grieve you, agonize you, disturb you. It will be an awful strife, but it will be his last ; after that all is over. If you serve God, you shall pass through that as Christ did,—*with an agony*, but unhurt. Oh, God grant you grace to reach that hour victorious, to pass that hour victorious, to survive that hour more than conquerors, through Jesus Christ who loved you. Do not, then, fear the

struggle ; all will be well ; only fight on, resist to the last :—

“ Struggle through thy latest passion
To thy dear Redeemer’s breast,
To His uttermost salvation,
To His everlasting rest.

“ For the joy He sets before thee,
Bear a momentary pain ;
Die, to live the life of glory ;
Suffer, with thy Lord to reign.”

The wilderness was again quiet ; the last footsteps of Satan had died away ; amid the barren wilds again there stood *but One*—Jesus, the triumphant Son of God ; there He was, calm, peaceful, happy ; He had done His Father’s work, He had defeated Satan, He had won the first fight for us. How beautiful, amid the surrounding desolation, must the spiritual Conqueror have stood. Earth’s most barren spot most blest ! His mind looked onward into coming years ; He saw the thousands He had saved ; He knew the many He had aided who should be tempted like as He was ; He remembered our redemption, and He was happy. Other thoughts, too, may have been in His mind : the garden, the crown of thorns, the cross, the failing spirit, the dying hour,—but that all should ransom us, and He was happy again. At that still hour of holy

triumph, perhaps your trials and your souls were each remembered by Him. And now, behold, along the wild the feet of angels tread, down from God's throne of glory; they longed to comfort His suffering Son. How beautiful must that scene have been in the quiet wilderness,—Jesus, and a band of holy angels kneeling at His feet. Oh, too holy for this guilty world. Was there ever spot on earth so honoured?

So will God comfort you. When you are tempted, and have used His grace, and by it conquered, then He will send to comfort you; He will cheer you *in this wilderness*, and soon will call you away from it, and you shall “come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.”

Once more: like those angels, honour Christ. He has done much for you: all this temptation, and much more,—all were for you; for you the homelessness, the friendlessness, the cross, the desertion, the expiring sigh,—all were for you. Angels honoured Him; how much more you!

Honour Him by praying to Him, by praising Him, by giving yourself to Him, by professing His name, by not being ashamed, by teaching to others; above all, at His own Sacrament, at His own Table, at His last request. He bade you receive it,—He who has done so much for you; can you refuse? In love, in gratitude, in respect, in obedience, *can you refuse?*

SERMON V.

JESUS WEEPING AT THE TOMB OF LAZARUS.

Jesus said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto Him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how He loved him!—JOHN xi. 34—36.

WHEN we first read this touching story, one feeling rises in our mind,—Why did Jesus weep for Lazarus? He knew He could raise him if He would; He knew He would raise him, as He could. He knew that grave would open, that cold, stiff body would come forth, that heavy eye would awake, those weeping friends would rejoice, and all as soon as He should say, “Lazarus, come forth.” Why then was it that “Jesus wept?”

To answer this question we must say, we do not know all things, still less the great things to do with God. We shall know them, please God, some day; they are beyond our knowledge,—many things to do with God are. There is no

difficulty in this ; we should not be startled. How do we understand the way in which our mind acts on our body ; how of the strange changes of our thoughts, of the periods of nature ? We understand but little of any thing ; we know enough to get to heaven. As far as this purpose, then, is concerned, let us examine the reasons of Christ's weeping.

I would just say, before I go further, with regard to what I said above,—how little we understand the ways of Christ very often. For example, when He heard of Lazarus' illness, "He abode two days where He was ;" then, telling His disciples that Lazarus was dead, He said He was glad for their sakes He was not there, and said He would go and awaken him ; then, when He came to Bethany, He was so moved with sorrow about him, that "He groaned in spirit and was troubled ;" then, in spite of His weeping, He raised Lazarus.

All this is strange to human minds. It is enough for us that "Jesus wept." Again, in the garden, He says, "Sleep on now, and take your rest ;" then, directly after, "Rise, let us be going."

Then, again : "He that hath no sword, let him sell a garment and buy one ;" then, "It is

enough ;” then, “Put up again thy sword into his place, for all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword.”

The ways of Christ, then, are difficult to understand ; we must be satisfied with what we know, and gather the lessons we can from that.

Let us proceed to do this with regard to the weeping of Jesus over the tomb of Lazarus. And before we examine the motives of Christ, as our comfort and example, let us see the story as it stands in the Bible.

a. When Jesus took upon Him the form of a human being, He took on Him also the feelings and affections of a man. He became subject to love, pity, sorrow, bereavement, toil,—everything to which man is subject ; He accordingly had His friends, His peculiar friends, among the sons of men. There were His apostle St. John, and Lazarus, for Jesus loved Lazarus. He heard that Lazarus was ill,—“sick unto death ;” his sisters sent to Him to tell Him so ; He told His apostles their friend was ill, presently that he was dead. Hearing this, they set off to see him. On their way they meet with one sister, then with the other. How they must have clung to Jesus for help in their affliction ! He had always been good to them, surely He would not desert them

now. He promises he shall rise again ; He then approaches the tomb,—“it was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.” On His way to it everybody was weeping, as they fell in behind Jesus, wondering what He would do to relieve their sorrow. When Jesus saw them weeping, “He groaned in spirit and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They said to Him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept.” They now come to the cave. What a moment! How still they must all have been! Would He, could He, restore him? The stone was rolled away from the place where the dead was laid. Then He prayed, then He turned to the grave, and spoke to the dead body. There it lay, still, stiff, corrupt,—four days dead. He cried, “*Lazarus, come forth.*” And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes.” The colour came to the white cheek, life to the heavy eye, breath to the still bosom, and at the word of Jesus, Lazarus was again alive: “Loose him, and let him go.” What a simplicity, yet what a majesty, of language! Then there could be no more doubt about Jesus: He had raised Jairus’ daughter, but she had only just died; He had raised the widow of Nain’s son, but he was yet unburied; Lazarus had been dead and buried

four days already, and yet He had raised him. "Truly this was the Son of God," "the prophet that should come into the world;" "And many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on Him."

This is the story. Now let us see the lessons.

The part I have taken for our instruction out of it is *the weeping of Jesus*.

β. What led our Saviour to weep over the dead, who could at a word restore him,—nay, who intended to do so?

1. As the story tells us, He wept from very sympathy with the grief of others: "When Jesus saw Mary weeping, and the Jews also weeping who came with her, He groaned in spirit, and was troubled." It is the very nature of compassion "to rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." We know it is so with us, and God says He is compassionate and full of tender mercy. When Jesus wept, it was the love of God condescending to weep with man; it was a bending of the divine nature to sympathize with the human being. Jesus wept, then, not merely from the deep thought of His understanding, but from willing tenderness, from gentleness and mercy, from the strong affection of the Son of God for His own work, the race

of man. Their tears touched Him at once, as their miseries had brought Him down from heaven. His ear was open to them, and the sound of weeping went at once to His heart. He wept with men : they were His own ; He had loved them long ago ; He had come from heaven to die for them ; their sorrows were His sorrows, their interests His interests, their tears His tears, their joys His joys. If man was happy, He was glad, He was glorified ; if man was afflicted, "in all their afflictions He was afflicted," He bore their sorrows and procured their bliss.

First, then, it was *sympathy* made Jesus weep.

a. He did it, first, *for our comfort*. If Jesus wept for Lazarus, He will weep for you ; if He felt with Mary and Martha, He will feel with you ; He enters as deeply into your interests and concerns. It may be wonderful, but yet it is true,—Jesus takes a deep interest in the concerns of the believer. Then what an encouragement for you to carry your sorrows to Him, to pour out your heart to Him ; not to vent a heavy spirit by murmuring or fruitless complaining, but by telling to Christ the tale that aches your heart ; never mind what it is,—poverty, friendlessness, unkindness, ill-repute, bereavement, ill-health, low spirits, backsliding, a heavy con-

science,—carry them all to Jesus, tell them all to Him, “Commune with your own heart, in your chamber, and be still.”

“Have you no words? oh think again,—
Words flow apace when you complain,
And fill your fellow-creature’s ear
With the sad tale of all your care.”

β. Secondly, Jesus did this for our example.

The Bible tells us to “rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep.” It is a beautiful thing to do, and yet how few do it! It is more common to be envious at another’s joy than to rejoice at it. I have even known it common to rejoice at another’s tears. How do you act here? It is a hard thing to be a Christian in this respect; I may say it is against nature; it must be by grace. And yet it is of all things that which would make this world the most happy. To go to the cottage where a widow is weeping in solitude over the companion of life departed, and there to mix our tears with hers, to take an interest in her grief, and to cheer a breaking heart by shewing it that there is some to feel with it, and sympathize with its affliction; to go to the bedside of the sick or dying, to forget our own comforts to comfort them, to cheer their languid solitude by reading, talking, pray-

ing,—oh these seem commonplace things, but they are Christian things, they are what adorn and set forth the Christian character; though little, they are the very fruits of the Christian. There is many a little child who is motherless whom a Christian mother might instruct; many a wandering stranger we might bless by a word of advice or a gift of charity; many a forlorn and friendless heart we might cheer with a word of friendliness. Oh, there is no feeling on earth so cheerless as to know that there is

“None to smile when we are free,
And when I weep, to weep with me.”

And this is the very character of the Christian friend,—like his beloved Master weeping with the sisters at the grave of Lazarus. Not forgetting that in the time of joy we must rejoice too, even if we have nothing, and our fellow possess the very comforts of which we are bereft. This is hard, very hard, and by the grace of God alone can we hope to do it. . But we must, if we are followers of Christ.

2. But next, “Jesus wept” because the scene before Him reminded Him of the sorrows of the lot of man. His pity began to look around upon the miseries of man. What was it He saw?

The victory of death, a mourning multitude, all that might awaken sorrow, save in him who was its object,—he was not—a stone marked the place where he lay,—Mary and Martha, in deep affliction, in faith and resignation, yet in complaint: “Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.” How often have men seen sin and misery, and cried out, “If Thou hadst been here!” Here then was the Creator surrounded by His own works; would He not then revert to the hour of creation, when He went forth from the bosom of His Father to make all things live? There had been a day when all things were “very good;” the good had been destroyed,—“an enemy had done this.”

Here, then, was another cause of sorrow; the contrast of Adam when in the day of unfallen innocence, and now man as the devil had made him, full of the poison of sin and the breath of the grave, full of sorrow, complaint, and fear; and though He was about to change the scene of sorrow to one of joy, yet after all Lazarus one day must die again. A stone lay upon him now, and though he was raised from the grave, one day he must lay there again. It was a respite, not a resurrection. Then Jesus wept for

the sins and sorrows of man in general,—He wept for sin, which had brought sorrow.

Here, then, is *comfort* and *instruction*.

a. Jesus weeps for sin, the sins of men ; therefore He hates them, therefore He will take them away. Jesus regrets your sins,—He will take them away. Go to Him to be forgiven. This is your *comfort*.

β. There is also *instruction*. If He hated sin, we must hate it too. But do we? First, in ourselves. Do we *hate* it? I do not mean, do you fear its consequences only, but do you hate it because God hates it? If you did, you would never give way to inconsistency, saying, “Never mind, I am very right on the whole,—God will pass over a little act ; never mind one bad temper, that will not ruin me, that will not undo me : I know it is wrong, but still I will give way to it.” Do you say this? Then you do not hate sin as Jesus hated it. You dread its consequences, you do not hate its guilt ; you make a bargain with God about sin : this will not do.

2. But again : Do we hate sin in others? Oh how often not ; how often we enjoy the merry joke at the expense of religion, the bitter sarcasm at the expense of another ; the hours of light vanity, the empty, useless conversation, the sinful

thought, the lustful desire, the worldly pleasure, the profane joke ! How often we enjoy all these—do we not ? or at least, if we do not enjoy them, do we not often not hate them and reprove them ? Do we not often feel more inclined to pity men's sorrows than their sins ? Does not your heart often bleed at the miseries of a suffering body more than at the prospects of an unsaved soul ? How many would rather give a penny to a beggar than the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a sinner ! Do you want to know if you do thus hate sin ? What do you do to remedy it ? Do you reprove it ? do you discourage it ? do you give the knowledge of Christ to the sinner ? Oh, Jesus wept for sin at the grave of Lazarus ; you must weep for it at every turn of life.

3. "Jesus wept" because He had come to do a deed of mercy which was a secret in His own breast. All the love He felt for Lazarus was a secret from others. He knew He loved him, but none knew the depth of His love ; they could only cry with wonder, "Behold, how He loved him !" He had no earthly friend He could tell His feelings to ; He was like Joseph in a strange land, His heart yearned towards His brother, and He sought "where to weep," as if

His own tears were His best companions and relief.

He was as the mother leaning over her child, and weeping upon it from the very consciousness of its helplessness, and ignorance of the love poured out upon it. But the parent weeps from the feeling of her weakness to defend her child ; knowing that what is now a child must grow up and take its own course, and whether for heavenly or earthly good depends not on her, but on God. Christ's was a different contemplation, yet attended with its own peculiar emotion : I mean, the feeling that He *had* the power to raise Lazarus ; that in spite of the tears and lamentations, in spite of the corpse four days old, in spite of the grave and the stone upon it, He would raise Lazarus. Is there any time more affecting than when you are about to break good news to a friend who has been made to sorrow with news of ill ?

4. But once more. " Jesus wept " because this blessing for the sisters of Bethany was to be attained—how ? by His own suffering. He raised Lazarus, and that sealed His own death. This He knew beforehand ; He saw the prospect before Him ; He saw Lazarus raised, the supper in Martha's house, Lazarus sitting at table, joy

on all sides of Him, Mary with ointment, the Jews crowding to see Him and Lazarus, His entrance to Jerusalem, the multitudes' hosannahs, the Greeks' anxiety to see Him, the children greeting Him; then the Pharisees plotting, Judas betraying, His friends deserting, and the cross receiving Him. He felt Lazarus was awaking to life at His own sacrifice, that He was descending into the grave which Lazarus left; He felt that Lazarus was to live for Him to die; the feast was to be Lazarus's, the last supper for Him. He had come from heaven to be an atonement for sin, to raise believers from the grave, as He was about to raise Lazarus,—to raise them for eternity, not for time. By His own act, by His bitter trial, He was about to "open the kingdom of heaven to all believers;" so He said, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

Thus, then, "Jesus wept" at the grave of Lazarus for His own troubles which were coming on Him,—for He was man as well as God.

What comfort, what instruction, shall we take here? There are both.

a. There is comfort in knowing from Christ's

example that we may weep at sorrow, so as we do not complain: there is no harm in tears. It is a fiction of man to laugh at honest tears; they are meant to flow at trouble, and so the mind be relieved while the eye is weeping: there is no harm in weeping.

Again: there is comfort in knowing that Christ could feel His trouble; it shews how fully He was a man, how deeply sensitive, how able to feel with us.

Again: there is comfort in knowing of the trials for which Christ wept, because they procured our forgiveness:—"The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed."

β. What instruction is there here? The tears of Jesus were tears of resignation; while He wept He did not complain,—He was patient, gentle, and resigned.

This is your lesson here. Are you in any trouble? or does trouble lie before you? Then you may weep, but not complain; you may be a man, but not a murmurer. Do you strive at this? are you patient under trouble? Why should you hope to be without it? was ever a Christian without it? Can you reach heaven without it? Was Christ without it? Can your faith be tried,

your affections purified, the world weaned, without it? Oh no,—impossible. Then do not murmur at trials. If you weep, do not complain.

We have found out four reasons why Christ may have wept,—His sympathy, His pity for man, His inward, unknown love, His own sad prospect. We have a lesson and a consolation from nearly all. Then from the story itself let us take this thought,—in trouble, sickness, or death, wherever faith in Christ is, there is Christ Himself. He said to Martha, “Believest thou this?” where there is a heart to answer, “Lord, I believe,” there Christ is present; there Christ will stand, though unseen, whether over the bed of death, or over the grave; whether we ourselves are sinking, or those we love. Blessed be His Name, nothing can take Him away, if we will keep close to Him; we may know He is with us, as if we saw Him. Oh, when you lay your loved ones in the grave, when the last tie is severed, when your own last sickness comes, when the damp of death is on you, when the world is passing from you, then—

“Though unseen by human eye,
Your redeeming God is nigh.”

Jesus is near you,—near you at the unclosed grave, near you in your weeping hour; and if

you will but believe, He will raise you from your sorrow. You see Him not, but He thinks of you ; He knows the beginning of your illness, though He keep afar off ! He knows when to remain away, and when to draw near ; He tells truly when His friend Lazarus is sick, and when he sleeps. Let us wait His time ; He knows best, we know nothing. Only let us keep near Him ; in every affliction let us look to Him, whether at a brother's grave or at our own death-door. And happy shall we be if on the morning of the resurrection our grave break open, like the grave of Lazarus, and we are awakened by the voice of Jesus calling us forth as His friend.

SERMON VI.

CHRIST'S HUMILIATION.

*The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests ; but
the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.*

MATT. viii. 20.

IF one tear shall ever dim our eyes in heaven, it will be to think how we could sin against so gracious a Saviour as we shall then be looking at. If ever we weep in heaven, it will be that we sinned on earth.

I said I would dwell during Lent on various points of Christ's sufferings and sorrows. I purpose now speaking of the sorrows of His life, on future occasions on the sorrows of His closing scenes. From all we learn a lesson ; God grant we may feel it, and practise it.

a. Let me ask you to listen with an intention to learn ; do not be touched without being led on to practise better the will of your sorrowing Redeemer. Feelings that do not lead to practice leave us worse than they found us ; when we pity human suffering, if we do not help it,

we go on to pity less. If we shed a tear at the sufferings of Christ, and do not take up our own cross too, we had better not weep at all. Above all, do not let us be satisfied with mere feeling. Tears and sighs are easy things, obedience far harder. It is no difficult matter to sit an hour or so in church, and hear of the sorrows of Jesus, and feel a pity for Him, and think *that* religion, and ourselves very good; it is a harder thing to bear the cross after Him, to shew our sorrow by doing His will, to live for Him, not for the world. But remember, "If ye love Him, keep His commandments." If you feel for His loneliness in the desert, do you too separate yourselves from the world, and by fasting and prayer resist the devil. If you would feel for His agony in Gethsemane, do you also like Him bend beneath the will of your Father, however painful, and strive that His will, not thine own, be done. If you would be among the train of sorrowers who walked in silent grief through the gate of Jerusalem on that solemn morning when Jesus carried His cross; if you would follow in that silent train, and think, had you been there, and seen that worn-out figure bending with faintness beneath its heavy load,—the load your sins had caused,—you too would indeed have wept; then, Christian, do you

also bear the cross your Saviour bore, and walk without a murmur beneath the trials God may give you. Would your bosom have throbbed with agony when His holy Form was stretched upon the cross, and when, beneath a dark though mid-day sky, you saw the heavy drops that hung upon His bleeding brow, or trickled from His tortured hand ; or when, through the gloomy shadows of a sunless sky, your eye rested on His wasted face,—wasted by human suffering, by your unkindness, and now sunken with the touch of death ; when you saw the eye that ever had looked with love upon the sorrows of mankind, and ever had a tear to weep where others wept, now turned up in its last anguish to His Father's home, and yet no heart on earth to pity Him, no eye to weep for Him here below ; had you heard the cry that broke the solemn stillness,—the cry of a forsaken Son,—the cry that seemed wrung from an almost broken heart,—the cry that pierced the dark and sultry clouds,—“ My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? ”—as if His sorrowing Spirit had none to care for Him on earth, and thus turned for comfort to His Father ; had you heard that voice, now trembling in the faintness of death, and known it was the “ Son of God ; ” had you *almost heard*

the silence that succeeded, and waited to see if He would be answered; and when *no* answer came, He seemed for the moment indeed forsaken; when all around were expecting that those dark clouds would have rolled away, and the Father come to comfort His forsaken Son? But no answer came; not even an angel sent to whisper comfort. And then all was finished, and He died. Though unanswered of His Father, into His hands He commended His Spirit. Sinner, I say, had you been *there*, would *you* have wept? when you knew all that suffering was on your account, was your fault, was for your sins, would you have shed a tear? When you *read it*, do you weep? I say, do not weep only, but nail your sins on that Redeemer's cross, be crucified with Him, and, however forsaken, commend your spirit to your God.

β. With these feelings let us dwell on the subject of the text, that "the Son of God had not where to lay His head."

1. Let us see that this was the case.

2. Let us see the lesson we learn from it.

γ. 1. It was not that Jesus had no resting-place; it was not that the earth He had made would not give Him a shelter or afford Him comforts: "The whole earth was His, the round

world, and they that dwell therein ;” “ The cattle upon a thousand hills ” He could have called His own ; the waving corn and the golden harvest, the purple vine-tree and the luxurious olive, all were made by Jesus, and all belonged to Him. It was not that He had nothing to call His own,—“ For by Him were all things made, and without Him was not any thing made that was made.” It was not that there was no fruit that He might gather, for Gethsemane had her fig-trees, and by her hallowed streams the purple grape-vine grew. It was not that no streams were flowing where He might quench His thirst, for Cedron’s crystal waters knew the footsteps of their Lord, and Siloam’s glassy fountain flowed at *His* command. It was not that no corn-field waved where Jesus dwelt, for the rich harvests of Capernaum were watered by the waves of Genesaret, and when He would He gathered the corn. It was not that He could not quench His thirst with wine, for His were the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim, and His the vintage of Abiezer. It was not that no richer food was in His power, for His were all the beasts of the forest, and so were the cattle on a thousand hills. Yes, He could have looked around Him on Judæa’s fruitful valleys and her sunny hills ; He

could have trod her flowery shores, and walked on Hermon's dewy hill, and said, All these hath the Father given to His Son, these are My inheritance: "For the Father hath loved Me, and hath given all things into My hand." It was not that no dwelling-place offered itself to guard the Son of God, for the Temple's marble porticoes and her cedar halls were all His own, and once her golden pavement rejoiced when a greater than Solomon stood in Solomon's porch; it was not *therefore* that He had not "where to lay His head." No, for had He wished it, earth would have cast up her jewels to form her God a home. When He prayed He knelt upon the hard rock of the desert, but it was not that no flowers grew to form a richer ground, for His was the rose of Sharon, and His the lily of the valley. His followers were poor, but it was not that there were none better to follow Him, for "kings had desired to see His day;" for "Gentiles had come to His light, and kings to the brightness of His rising." He was poor, but it was not that He had nothing, for all the flocks of Kedar would have gathered to Him, and the rams of Nebaioth have ministered to Him; all they of Sheba would have brought their gold, and the ships of Tarshish their silver from afar. No; "though rich,

for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be made rich." It was for this that Jesus "had not where to lay His head," was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." He walked with His little band of destitute disciples across a thousand lovely vales; He *could* have called them all His own, but for your sakes He gave them up; He *could* have looked upward when treading His summer journeys through the villages of Samaria, and pierced the deep blue sky which burnt above Him, and have seen where millions of white-robed angels stood around "a great white throne,"—a throne where He had sat, a throne which now was empty. And when the sun shone upon His burning brow after His toilsome journey to the Well of Samaria, He could have said, "There is a land where that sun does not burn by day, and that land is My own." Yes, He could have had all things, for He was the best-beloved of His Father; He to whom all things shall be committed; He for whom "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." He could have had all things, but yet possessed nothing. He lived a dishonoured life, He died a dishonoured death, and that in the very world that was all His own.

He looked around Him on the splendours of earth, and although as man He might have been inclined to love them, what were they to Him? He was come to do His Father's will, He had come to save mankind; and if He stayed to enjoy the pleasures of the world—a world which knew not His Father—we should have been lost. Cæsar's throne and Herod's palace would have been too mean to be His resting-place; the soldiers of Rome might have followed Him, nay, angels would have loved to be His companions; but He chose rather the hosannahs of the children of Jerusalem, and the sons of Zebedee to be His servants. Poor and despised, He moved a forgotten stranger among the streets of the city; and while He wended His way towards some poor abode of sickness, He heard without a sigh the cry, "There goes the man of Galilee,"—"There walks the King of the Jews;" and children were taught to curse the humble Man of Nazareth, who had taken them in His arms, and loved them with a Saviour's love. He saw it all, and He bore it without a murmur. Without one feeling of revenge, He sat at midnight in His solitary house, and preached the Gospel to the fearful Pharisee who had stolen along the silent street to talk by lamp-light with the Son of God.

When He came into the city of Jerusalem He was met by the shout of "*Who is this?*" No nobler name was given Him than that of "the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee;" His birthplace became a byword, and His name a reproach.

The children of Judæa were all that honoured their despised Redeemer: they died for Him at Bethlehem; they hailed Him in the Temple; they called Him "the Son of David." "Surely He was despised and rejected of men; He was despised, and they esteemed Him not." But He looked onward to a brighter day, when He should have ransomed mankind, and have brought to His fold whom He came to save.—And when followed by the insulting crowd through the streets of the city, He bore it without a murmur, and was cheered by the thought that His sufferings and His blood might save even them. He loved to think that those insults which He calmly bore were the "chastisements of their peace," and the stripes by which they should be healed; that the day should come when many of that scoffing crowd should stand around the throne, and sing His praises and adore His love. Therefore He bore it: anger He never felt; once He had wept over Jerusalem, but it was the tear of pity and of mercy. Still He loved them, when they dragged

Him to Pilate's judgment-hall ; and to the last, when they had done all they could to shew their hatred, and when they nailed Him to the cross, He still called on His Father to "forgive them, for they know not what they do." Oh surely, "never was sorrow like unto His sorrow : " "In all our affliction He was afflicted ;" "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, and the Lord hath put Him to grief." He was happy, but it was in looking onwards ; He lived above the world, and far beyond its pleasures.

But why was it all ?

δ. It was not that He thought the beauties and comforts of the world were wrong. Had He come to visit our world when Eden's beautiful garden had as yet known no death, He would have entered into them too ; He would have loved the beauties He had made Himself ; He would have loved the world, and the things of the world. When Eden's waters flowed along without a breeze to ruffle them, without a storm to trouble them ; when her flowers blossomed upon a ground which knew not the drought of summer or the frost of winter ; when her beautiful forests shone with a sunshine that never knew a cloud, and the still twilight of her evenings heard no sound but the voice of the Lord walk-

ing along her hallowed glens,—then would Jesus have loved to enjoy the utmost pleasures of the world; then might man have no fear in enjoying them too. They were then no fading pleasures; the beauties of the world made them know more of God, and moth never corrupted their beauties, nor did thieves break through and steal. But sin came, and all was over; sin entered, and death by sin. No longer by the sunny fountain could the lion wander with the lamb, or the wolf and the kid lie down together. Death entered, and all was over. From that moment the world knew not God; from that moment the friendship of the world became enmity with God; sin defiled all its pleasures, and “if any man loved the world, the love of the Father was not in him.”

Those times, I say, are over: therefore Jesus did not love the world; therefore He “had not where to lay His head,” because the world around Him was an enemy to His Father. He came to set us an example, to live as He lived—above the world; to shew us how to fix our treasure in heaven. “It was the cup that His Father had given Him, and shall He not drink it?”

2. I said it was my intention to take various parts of the sufferings of Christ as our examples

for us to copy. I have to-day examined with you the sufferings of His life, His poverty, His sorrows.

What, then, is the lesson we learn from this? If we are to have the mind of Christ,—if the same Spirit that was in Him must be in us; if we are to follow His example, to tread in His footsteps,—is it, I ask, right that we should be living in the midst of all worldly pleasure, when He knew nothing of it? Are we to be fixing our treasure here, when His was fixed elsewhere? Can we be His disciples, His servants, when we are living thus, and “He had not where to lay His head?”

It is too true,—Christians in the present day live too much in the world; they live too much in worldly pleasure. We have lost that spirit of self-denial which does become the servants of Christ. Christians now seem to live as far as they can in the world, instead of trying to give it up as much as they can. Oh, we are so tied to earth, its pleasures have so wound themselves round our affections, that it is hard, very hard, to tear them away; they cling like the vine round the tree, and are eating into our very heart. They will not have done till they have utterly corrupted us, and we are utterly ruined. We are taking

root like flowers in a strange soil, a land which is not our own. It would be well if we could begin to loosen our roots, before they are torn up by force.

Let us see in what ways men live in too worldly a spirit; in what ways the conduct of Christ gives us an example how to act with regard to the world.

People sometimes think that a worldly spirit is only shewn by a love of the world's pleasures and gaieties. This is not the only way; there are many who know nothing of the gaieties of the world, who have no taste, no love for them, and, if they had, have no opportunity of joining in them; persons who love the quiet of their home, and their own domestic circle, who are seldom seen or known beyond their own door,—these yet may be living in a worldly spirit. A worldly spirit or a worldly heart is one that loves anything on earth more than God.

1. First, then, the love of children, if cared for more than God—if love for them come in the way of our love to God, it is a worldly spirit. Parents, you who love your children, you who look with all a parent's love upon the children whom you have brought up from their earliest hours, who have watched their ways, and loved to see them

know and love you, delighted to see them grow up admired or beloved,—do you love them more than God? if so, yours is a worldly spirit. Mothers, you who have watched in the hours of sickness over your suffering little ones, and gone through pain and weariness to give them a moment's ease; you who have toiled for your children through many an hour of sickness, hardship, and distress,—your sufferings for them perhaps unknown to any save your God and you,—do you love your children more than God? then yours is a worldly spirit. Fathers, you who have laboured beneath many a burning sun and winter's frost to get these children their daily food; you who have loved to see the child of your affection run to meet you at your return to home, who have loved them with a father's love, and looked at them with a father's pride, when they have wiled away your tired evening by their little ways of childish love, or amused you by their conversation, or looked up to you for a father's protection,—do you love these children more than God? then yours is a worldly spirit. Have you watched by the dying hour of some child you loved, have you heard the last struggle for breath, the last sigh of departing life, and watched till life was gone, and nothing but the cold form of death

lies before you to remind you of the little one you loved,—have you murmured against God? then yours was a worldly spirit. Any relation, any friend, loved more than God, makes a worldly spirit. Jesus never dwelt long with His mother Mary, and yet we know He loved her: He was ever about His Father's business, and family feelings never kept Him from His service towards God. His mother, and sisters, and brothers were those who did the will of God.

2. Again: a worldly spirit is shewn in attending more to the business of life than to religious duties. Do whole days sometimes go by without any thought of God,—days which are spent in earning your livelihood in an honest manner, but yet give you no time for prayer, for reading the Bible, for thinking, for talking to others around you whom God has given to your care? then yours is a worldly spirit. You may be the most honest man, the most steady man, the most hard-working man, that ever lived; you may have no interest beyond your own family, never be heard of beyond your own door,—and be the most worldly man that ever lived. Does religion mix up with all the business of the day? have you God's will in view in everything you do? if not, yours is a

worldly spirit, and you will never get to heaven with it. This did not Jesus; He was about His Father's business day and night: cold and hunger, laughter and scorn, could not drive Him from His Father's work.

3. Again: are you striving at more than you really want? are you spending money and time in luxuries or comforts that you can do without? are you seeing how much more happy you can make this world than it is? then you are only binding tighter the chains that keep you here; then you are only letting the world creep closer round your heart, and the pang will be still more bitter when at last you *must* go. Jesus had just what was needful for the body,—scarcely that,—“He had not where to lay His head.” Are you copying Him? If you have more than you want, why add to the comforts which only make it more difficult to go at last? The last pang must be a bitter one, come when it will; the rending of body and soul must be terrible; the tearing all our affections from all we ever loved on earth must be dreadful! Oh, why increase it by adding more? There are others we may help, if we have more than enough,—others who want it more than we.

4. Again: Do you love pleasure? is the com-

pany of people whom you cannot think serve God pleasant to you? do you spend hours in amusements that do the soul no good, that make the heart more light, that unfit for prayer? do you love the company of those who do not love God, in whose society God's name is never mentioned, or, if at all, *in vain*? Is the giddy round of earthly pleasure your delight? do you love it more than God, more than your Bible, more than your Redeemer's name? then yours is a worldly spirit, and with it you cannot go to heaven. Such a spirit had not Jesus : amid the gay and thoughtless He was grave ; I do not fear to say it,—so ought we. If we are God's children, we *shall* not, we *cannot* love the world ; no, not even in the least degree. What I mean by the world is pleasure in anything that has not the glory of God, at least, in view.

How are you living in these respects? how will you be able to give in your last account? how does that account stand with God? Are you living in the world? are you living satisfied with that? does your religion allow you to do so? then you are deceived; you will end in ruin—ruin everlastingly. Oh! as you love your immortal souls, fly from its fatal touch. Each year, each day you live in it, binds you closer

to it, and makes the last struggle more full of agony. Jesus is your example here; He is your Saviour; He, and only He, can give that last moment one ray of peace.

ε. But remember, all things may in their way be enjoyed; it is the making too much of these things that is the fault.

I mean not that parents should not love their children; God forbid: God gave them that they might be loved; He loves to see the affections of a parent's heart drawn out towards those little ones whom He Himself has sent. Yes, He loves your care for those families which grow around you. But remember, you are not to love them too well; you are not to let them prevent your thinking of God, your coming to His house, your reading His Word. Or again: when He takes them away, you are not to murmur;—I do not say, not grieve, for grieve you must; but do not complain,—they were not given, they were only lent you,—lent you to bring up for heaven; lent you for you to shew them the way to heaven; lent you to cheer your solitary hours, and to draw forth your love. When God calls them while young away, and you are obliged to lay in the grave the child you loved, you must remember it is gone to a better home than you can

give it. It is still of your family, but it is gone home before you.

Or again: the business of life must be followed; your heavenly Father never meant it otherwise: but religion must not be placed aside; that *must* mix *with* everything, or *everything* will go wrong. Of pleasures, too, you may have some, but not of those which unfit you for prayer, which do not draw you nearer God, or which make you love the world more. It is this that makes a worldly spirit, and a worldly spirit cannot lead to heaven. I do not mean, that if you find you still love these things too well, you should be alarmed and discouraged; simply, are you *striving* to overcome them? are you trying to live nearer God, less for earth?

If you could live here for ever, it would not matter,—but you cannot; love the world as you will, you must leave it. Even now its pleasures are fading in your hold, and as you seize them, like gathered flowers, they perish in an hour. What you love best often goes the first, and the pleasures of this world must disappoint. They are but as the colours of a rainbow, which fly from hill to hill as you try to catch them; they are but air at last,—empty, nothing,—made by a sunshine that must soon set for ever. Heaven

has a brighter treasure, one which will not, cannot fade. Oh seek it while yet you may ; let that be the work of your life ; let the prospect of heaven cheer you in the hours of your pilgrimage, and let the joys of Zion be your joys on earth. Let your heart long to be where Jesus is ; and ever looking upward, let your language be : “ Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then would I flee away and be at rest.”

“ Jerusalem, my happy home,—
Name ever dear to me,—
When shall my sorrows have an end,
In joy, and peace, and thee !”

Such your wishes, such your language, oh gather around your Saviour's Table, and eat of His sacred feast,—one of no earthly greatness, a feast as humble as He who gave it, but one which shall comfort you, and strengthen you ; one that shall help you a little further on your road ; one that reminds you that Christ is still near you, and ready to help you. Come to it, and may you indeed be blest.

SERMON VII.

THE PASSION.

He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace was upon Him ; and with His stripes we are healed.—ISAIAH liii. 5.

How beautiful and touching are the words of this chapter, written so many hundred years before, as if the scene were at that moment before the prophet's eyes ; how exquisitely does it paint before us the anguish of a Saviour's suffering, the brightness of a sinner's hope !

How all the inventions of man pass away ! Where is the natural goodness of man, when placed beside this means of salvation ? Take him in his best hours ; how can his own natural disposition come up to the sufferings of Jesus Christ as an acceptable sacrifice to God ?

What are man's brightest and best hours ? Perhaps when the mother devotes her life, her health, her time to the little infant who has no

other protector ; but how imperfect in the eyes of God must that be to make up as a sacrifice for sin. Is not her affection weak, infirm, nay, sinful ? does it not proceed from an earthly spirit ? does it not often end in idolatry ?

Perhaps, then, man is better when we see him actively employed for another's good ; forgetting self, and devoting time, labour, money, all for his fellow-being. But how imperfect, again, is this to make up as a sacrifice for sin. Is not his activity often the result of a desire of approbation, a love of applause, a desire for the good opinion of mankind ? If not arising from this, is it not often stained with this, until benevolence becomes love of approbation, and activity for another ends in ambition for self.

Perhaps, then, man is better when leading a life of seclusion and retirement, intently perusing the page of learning and deep research. How imperfect, again, is this life of retirement to make up as a sacrifice for sin. Does not vanity creep in to fill his mind ? does not a good opinion of self, of his own ability, of his own superiority, creep in and mar the whole, and make what appeared a beautiful picture of the greatness and power of man no fitting sacrifice to a holy God for the sins of his other hours ?

Oh no ; nothing that we do ourselves can atone for sin ;—no goodness, no amiability, no self-denial, no natural powers or attainments ; nothing but the blood, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, can atone for sin. Nothing but that can cleanse the soul of man from the defilement of Adam's guilt, for years of actual transgression :—

“ Could our tears for ever flow,
Could our grief no respite know,
All for sin could not atone,—
Christ must save, and Christ alone.”

Every man had sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Something must be offered to make up for this sin, to become a sacrifice for it, to bear the punishment of sin deserved, or else every soul must be lost for ever. That is the plain doctrine of the Bible, and that is the plain conviction and experience of human nature. First, that man has sinned ; secondly, that sin demands sacrifice or punishment.

I said, it is the evidence of the Bible that all have sinned : “ There is none that doeth good, no, not one ;” “ All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” And I said it is the evidence of human experience. Whose heart does not plead guilty to the charge of sin ? can any say, I have not sinned ? Has no unkind thought,

no discontented feeling, no unclean desire, no proud ambition, no vanity, no deceit, no jealousy, been felt within you or proceeded from you? Who can declare themselves clear? Not one. Then by your own conviction all have sinned.

And I said also, it is the evidence of the Bible that a sacrifice for sin is needful,—or punishment. We find the doctrine running through the whole Bible, as the great foundation of all its precepts and statements,—sin demanding punishment or sacrifice; i.e. the punishment of the sinner, or the punishment of some one for the sinner. And it is the conviction of human nature without the Bible; for you will hardly find a heathen nation who are not trying to please their god, and to make up for the guilt of sin to their god, by sacrifice and atonement. So it is the conviction of human nature planted in it by the God who made human nature.

a. And now, having shewn the necessity of such sacrifice, we will proceed to see the sacrifice which has been made for sin. The beautiful words of our text exactly express the fact of Jesus Christ having been the sacrifice for our sin:—"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." Jesus Christ is a sufficient substitute for the sinner; a substi-

tute able to endure the punishment which the sinner deserved to endure ; to die the death—soul and body—which the sinner deserved to die ; to challenge Almighty justice ; to say, “ What wouldest Thou ? ” And Justice says, “ I would the death—soul and body—of these guilty rebels.” “ If death be your just demand,”—to answer,—“ here am I,—take Me ; on Me execute the righteous sentence ; put Me to death—soul and body,—*instead* of these guilty rebels, and proclaim to them pardon and peace ;—not an extorted pardon, not a reluctant, grudging forgiveness, but a gracious, complete, eternal pardon,—a free, and to them unconditional, forgiveness ; assuring them, telling them, that as Thy unchanging faithfulness was pledged to punish them, so now is it pledged to save them. ‘ Thou hast prepared Me a body. In the volume of the book it is written of Me, I come to do Thy will ; yea, Thy law is within My heart.’ ‘ I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do ; and now I will that those whom Thou gavest Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me, for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world.’ ”

These are the words, and this is the work, of our Emmanuel, our Shepherd, our Saviour. This

is He who has thrown open for us wide the everlasting arms of God, which will not close again till they fold His ransomed to His bosom.

β. Jesus Christ, then, has been the sacrifice for our sins: "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities."

And now let us see that He did bear in *all ways* the guilt of the sinner. It pleased the Father to bruise Him, to put Him to an open shame, to make His soul an offering for sin. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree, the Just One suffering for the unjust; and by one offering of Himself *once offered*, He *put away* sin; blotting out as a thick cloud our transgressions, nailing them to His cross. Now, He died as a sinner, body and soul. From the hand of man His body endured the punishment due to a malefactor, by being crucified, which was a malefactor's death; by being crucified between *two malefactors*; by being crucified instead of Barabbas, a malefactor; by being buffeted, mocked, reviled, rejected, and despised, as a malefactor. Thus did Jesus Christ suffer from man in the body as a malefactor.

From the hand of God He suffered in the soul. He endured the agony due to an impenitent sinner; He was troubled in spirit,—yea,

exceeding sorrowful, even unto death ; He trod the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God ; He cried in the bitter anguish of His soul, " Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." But God spared Him not, for He is a just God. Now it is remarkable how exactly this is the case,—that God did not spare Jesus Christ, because He was a just God, and because it was needful Jesus Christ should suffer to the utmost as a malefactor,—when we turn to the opening verses of Psalm xxii. :—" My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? why art Thou so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring ? O My God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest not ; and in the night-season, and am not silent. But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." *Thou art holy*, Thou art just ; therefore Thou canst not listen to the cry of Thy Victim consistently with Thy justice ; Thou canst not spare one pang ; Thou canst not make the bitter cup one drop less. And these words are the acknowledgment of Jesus Christ ; and He did endure to the utmost, and therefore saved us. " There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." This is emphatically *the Gospel* ; this is the power of God, the wisdom of

God, the love of God, in the salvation of sinners ; this is the peculiar truth of the Bible,—a just God being a Saviour, a gracious Saviour continuing a just God.

Thus, then, was Jesus Christ killed—body and soul—by God and man, as a malefactor, as a sinner ; suffering for the sins of us who are sinners,—suffering in our stead. “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities.”

Now before I leave this part of my subject, let me remark that it is the peculiar part of the religion of Jesus Christ alone that the punishment for sin *must be borne* by some one ; and it alone teaches that it has been borne by some one. One religion teaches that God forgives the sinner for his repentance, or amendment, or both ; another, for the sacrifices they offer up ; a third, for the bodily sufferings they undergo, and the overplus of good they pretend to do at one time to make amends for their evil at another, or for some mixture of these. But all these religions are false : “Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” Therefore no unconverted person who does not wholly, simply, and entirely depend on the Lord Jesus Christ for entrance into eternal glory,—to whatever sect he may belong, what-

ever profession he may make, however high he may stand in all moral attributes, however much he may be able to expatiate on the benevolence of the Divine Being,—no such man is worshipping the God mentioned in the text, a just God and Saviour, but some other god ; who yet is “not another, for there is no God else beside Me, saith Jehovah.” No ; since the whole Bible,—from the story of Cain and Abel to the song of the redeemed in Revelations,—does insist on the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins only by shedding of blood, we must either renounce our Bibles, or else persist in the statement that in the Cross of Christ God is revealed ; that it is only on the altar of that heart which pleads the atoning blood of Jesus Christ that God is worshipped,—a just God and a Saviour.

Thus, then, we have seen, first, that no human goodness or effort of man is sufficient to expiate the sins of man ; secondly, that some sacrifice must be made ; thirdly, that Jesus Christ has become that sacrifice ; fourthly, that Jesus Christ suffered in the position of the sinner, both at the hands of God and man, Soul and Body ; fifthly, that the Christian religion *alone* teaches, and that the Christian religion *does teach*, this true, sound, spiritual doctrine of remission of sins

through shedding of blood, thereby satisfying the justice of God, as well as His mercy, who is a just God and a Saviour. Therefore the Lord Jesus Christ on this day "was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities."

γ. Now, next, for whom is this sacrifice made, this forgiveness offered, this pardon sealed? For all the world. "Ho *every one* that thirsteth, come ye to the waters;" "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth;" "Come unto Me all ye that are weary, and I will give you rest." Therefore to every person is this salvation freely offered, richly, abundantly bestowed. The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost; and you were lost, therefore He has come to seek and to save you.

1. There is one condition of this salvation; what is it? It is repentance,—repenting of past sin, intending well for the future; and there is no other qualification required. None who came to Him, simply depending on His mercy, were ever cast out. What was said of Him once in scorn is emphatically true of Him:—"He receiveth sinners," "without money and without price;" without any previous preparation except a devoted, penitent heart, willing to do all that He appoints, with the help of His grace.

What ! cries the Pharisee,—this is to hold out encouragement to wickedness ; this is to make no difference between the amiable and ill-natured, the affectionate, kind, and charitable, and the openly profane ; to level the useful, honourable, and active, with the meanest profligate ; this is to say a sinful publican is as likely to receive mercy at God's hands as a strict and upright Pharisee ; this cannot be the doctrine of the Gospel.

Now in answer to this frequent objection, I will use sound speech that cannot be condemned. “Two men went up into the temple to pray ; the one a (strict) Pharisee, the other a (sinful) publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself,—God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other : for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased ; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” This Pharisee was worshipping

a God whom he hoped to make his friend by his upright and regular life ; the publican was worshipping a God of justice,—pronouncing himself guilty, yet looking to God as a merciful Saviour. Thus, then, there is no difference ; “for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ;” and all are equally, if penitent, “justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” This redemption all need equally, whether they be by nature fair, honourable, kind, noble, shining with every moral virtue ; or whether they be bad, vile, hideous, and morally deformed. All need it equally, and all may have it equally, whatever they may be, so as only they be truly penitent, and willing to accept the conditions of the Gospel.

δ. And now arises another question,—“ Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound ?” As we may be so freely pardoned, shall we therefore freely sin ? Impossible : “without holiness no man can see the Lord.” And if you are willing to plead this excuse for sin, if you are willing to give way to your natural sins and infirmities with this way of escape, you are not, you cannot be, truly penitent ; which, as I said above, was the only condition, on our part, of salvation.

Oh beware of such an abuse of the blessed

doctrines of the Cross. Do not think the death of Jesus Christ will excuse you in the indulgence of even an idle word. Oh no ; if you indulge ever so light a sin, you cannot be a member of Christ. I do not mean, if you sometimes commit such against your will and inclination ; but I mean, if you indulge such, if you love such, if you do not bitterly regret such with all your heart when you have committed them.

ε. And now I must draw to a conclusion. I have laid before you the true view of the salvation of man,—man a sinner, the sacrifice needful, Christ that sacrifice, how He was that sacrifice ; and whom this doctrine is for,—the penitent, *all* that are penitent, and are willing to take the offers and conditions of mercy ; that no requirement is needful on our part, except repentance,—no original goodness, no natural merit, no disposition,—to make us more deserving of eternal life ; and, lastly, that this doctrine is not to be used as an excuse for our human infirmity, on the peril of the immortal soul.

Having laid down this truth — salvation in Jesus Christ,—will you accept it ? On this day, many hundred years ago, was this sacrifice made ; it was made for you, as well as for those who lived then,—it was made for all the world.

Do I speak to any man who is bowed down with a sense of his many sins? does he feel he has too often sinned, often broken good resolutions,—too often, as he thinks, to be forgiven? I beg you to remember, Jesus Christ “was wounded for your transgressions, and bruised for your iniquities.”

Do I speak to any who is trusting to his own righteousness to save him, who is leaning on his own works to carry him to heaven? Let him not pass by so great, so efficacious a sacrifice, to trust on what will so little aid him; for Jesus Christ “was wounded for his transgressions, and bruised for his iniquities.”

Do I speak to any one who is not thinking about religion at all, who comes to church by mere accident or from curiosity, who knows nothing of religion in the heart, who is living for pleasure, self, and sin? Do not neglect so great a sacrifice, so kind a Saviour, for “He was wounded for your transgressions, and bruised for your iniquities.”

Do I speak to any one who, imposing on his Christian liberty, sins that grace may abound? is careless, inconsistent, and thoughtless, because he hopes the death of Jesus Christ will make all *right* at last? Let me remind him that he must

strive after a holy life, *though* Jesus Christ “was wounded for his transgressions, and bruised for his iniquities.”

Do I speak to any one who, loving the Lord Jesus Christ supremely, depends wholly on Him for salvation, and striving by the help of God’s Spirit after a holy life, goes on his way rejoicing, caring nothing for the trifles of time, looking beyond the barriers of the tomb,—whose life is Christ, whose death is gain? Let him press with courage and joy on his heavenly road, blessing God that Jesus Christ “was wounded for his transgressions, and bruised for his iniquities.”

SERMON VIII.

THE REIGNING AND SUFFERING OF HOLY-WEEK.

If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.—2 TIM. ii. 12.

1. WE are thinking of the week of His Passion who suffered for us : for us each day of Agony was spent, for us each drop of precious Blood was shed ; for us each day was marked with some especial sorrow,—days are they of sorrow, surely a passion-week,—a suffering week ; and all for us. His passion-week, that we might have eternity without passion ; His suffering time, that we might be without suffering for ever ; the week on which, “for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross and despised the shame.”

Surely if He suffered *so*, and all for us, we should suffer too,—feel with Him ; for “if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him,”—be kings as well as sufferers. So it is well that this week begins with Palm Sunday,—Palm, the sign of

victory,—conquering by suffering, beginning with triumph, and ending with it.

2. He being our Head, we suffer with Him,—we, the members ; He feeling with us, we should feel with Him ; He being dead, we put on our mourning dress of sorrow ; He dying, we draw out of the world to dwell on His sufferings and wait their end. All this is good and natural, and we are told it in holy Scripture :—“ Suffer *with* Him ;” fill up His sufferings. And now, how ? how fill up ? Kings and sorrowers,—sorrowers to be kings ; a crown, but of thorns ; a sceptre, but of reed ; a robe, but of blood ; a throne, but a cross. So He, so we ; as the Master, so the disciple. If He, then we ; if we suffer with Him, to reign with Him.

Each day this week there was something of His—some suffering, some triumph—which we may share with Him.

On Palm Sunday He rode into the city on an ass. Bethany lay behind the hill, the hill of gardens, the mount of Olives, the hill where Gethsemane was ; and He, having travelled towards the village, reached it on Saturday evening : He had dined at Zacchæus’ house on Friday, and come His last journey ; He came a willing Victim,—He came to die ; He set out early to the

hill, like Isaac, being called of God. "My Father, behold the wood, but where is the lamb?" He did not say, that He knew. He went to the city a sufferer, and yet a King, for of this very journey it had been said before, "Behold, thy King cometh to thee, sitting on an ass." And the people carried the palm, and cried Hosannah. But a sufferer too, for He saw before Him the city where He should die.

On Monday He came back to the city, and went to the Temple, and cleansed it, and re-proved the people who were there. On Tuesday He told the Pharisees of their sins. He spoke as a king speaks with his people, as one with authority; a King, and yet a sufferer, for His Father's house was dishonoured, and Himself despised.

On Thursday He ate the Last Supper;—a King going to His kingdom, to receive a kingdom, and to return; a King, but a King of sorrows; for at His last feast of farewell His familiar friend went out and betrayed Him; and He was that night exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood.

On Friday—that was the day, *the* day of sorrows. A King still, He stood before His judge

and spoke of His kingdom ; He wore His crown all day, and His robe, and He was on His throne, and from His throne He gave His word, His word of mercy and forgiveness ; and they called Him a King, and they bowed the knee. A King, then, but a suffering one ; reigning, yet suffering ; speaking as a King, but bound ; crowned, but with thorns ; sceptered, but with a reed ; robed, but with blood ; throned, but on a cross ; issuing His word to a dying thief ; bowed to, but in mockery ; called a King, but they ill brooked it. So in all, reigning and suffering ; reigning *here* in suffering, in glory there. And so we, if we suffer with Him, shall reign with Him ; if we reign, we must suffer : for He was all this for us, and we must be it for Him. His thorns were to shew our pains ; His reed to remind Him not to break the bruised reed ; His Cross crowned all, that contained all our troubles and sins too, that was the shame, the shame of sin. “ In all our afflictions He was afflicted.”

3. And now, how are we to share it all ? If His was the beginning of ours, and we fulfil, finish His sufferings in our flesh, we must go through all this.

On *Palm Sunday* it was the prospect of all the sorrow before Him.

On *Holy Monday* it was the seeing His holy House dishonoured.

On *Wednesday* it was His Betrayal.

On *Thursday* it was His friend turning from Him.

On *Friday* it was the pain of dying.

And we have all these, and must, if we belong to Him.

a. *Expect troubles.* Here is one of our greatest trials; but we are called to it with Him. We are often willing to bear any trial, so as we know the end; so as we can say, it will last so long, and no longer; so as we can say, then I shall be at rest. But that is not our case here; it *never* will be; it is our trial to have an uncertain time before us: "We know not what may be on the morrow."

We often feel our trials come for good. But we feel, when they are over, when God has removed them, we may be quiet,—feel secure, feel free: we feel we have a right to be secure after any affliction; we think, "others must have their turn, I have had mine." We shrink from *going on*; we would bear any trouble certainly, however great, rather than little ones uncertainly.

But there is the very point. We are not to

be at rest here; we are uncertain,—one trial is only to prepare us for another; we are to consider troubles as never coming alone, they are many links of one chain. The first severe trial is the first opening of God's dealing with us. This is your lesson on Palm Sunday: look on to sorrow, as He to His week of passion. It is your way of being one with Him, your way of feeling you are His members, your bond of communion with Him. Love it. Though uncertain here, have you nothing bright to look to? Much; home beyond the trials, rest and certain calmness after death; perfect peace, heaven, and a mind securely stayed on Christ here. "In the world ye shall have tribulation," "My peace I give unto you."

So we suffer now as He in His Passion. We go an uncertain journey; we come day by day to watch and pray; we know not what is before us. This at least we know, that our "labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Monday's suffering was the seeing holy things dishonoured, His Father's name despised. We have the same; we see it done by ourselves and others; we see wicked men daily despising God, laughing at good things, and yet seeming to prosper. It is trying. We are ourselves abused

for doing our best ; we mean well, but are weak, and fall, and men make much of it, and say we are untrue, and hypocrites ; we feel there is not as wide a line between us and the ways of the wicked as we *would* have, and the wicked say there is none at all, and it grieves us. We strive and struggle all day with passion, and toil against our sinful heart,—no one knows how much, not our nearest friend,—and after all we are so weak that the wicked lay hold of it ; we hear the very things we cling to, as our last hope, abused and doubted of ; we feel often alone, and doubt, and cry, “ Lord, how long ? ” “ I do see the wicked in such prosperity.” But shall we shrink ? If we shrink from that, we shrink from Christ. He suffered that very trial. But to crown the whole, they said He had a devil, and was mad, and blasphemed ; He often heard His own and His Father’s name reviled. We all often hear ours and our Father’s name reviled ; we should bear it,—His God and our God, His Father and our Father. It is our way of suffering with Him. We care not for man ; there is a God knows all : we stand before Him ; “ He knoweth our frame.”

On Wednesday was His betrayal. The day was when His people shared these sufferings more

deeply than perhaps we do now ; when a man's foes were those of his own household, and the brother gave the brother to death, and the father the son. We have not the same now ; though sometimes it may be for us to have to choose between pleasing friends and pleasing God : sometimes they may look coldly on us, or blame us, because they cannot understand our motives ; and we shall feel it. Or perhaps we have the same trial in other forms ; if their anger is not our trial, their love may be. We perhaps love them too much, and care more to love them than God. It would be often our suffering to give up things we have been in the custom of doing ; but we must. Any man who thinks more of his earthly ties than of God, any one who neglects God for his family, or desires to live because he would not leave earthly ties, is an unwilling sharer in the sufferings of Christ ; all must be given up, if need be.

And of the day of sorrows. Our sicknesses and pain are the copies of that suffering : how do we bear them ? They are the throbs which pass through all the frame, through each member of His,—the throb from the pang of agony which His crown of thorns had given. We still shrink from them ; nay, we should so love them that we

would rather fear lest we love them too well, than be too glad to be rid of them. And yet men do not bear them so ; they are unwilling, and shrink from bodily suffering ; they turn away, and forget it is a holy thing, a gift of God. Perhaps we try to drive each holy messenger away too soon,—angels coming to our tent door unawares. Better guests are they than the visitants of this cold world with its idols too often throned in our hearts ; and yet many a man will have no peace till he has driven out a sickness, and takes no pains to drive out the evil spirit. We are too careless about trials, daily trials ; they are greater than we think for ; we are fulfilling, filling up, Christ's sufferings in them. A good man in suffering is holy ; holier than one without it ; our daily disappointments are passing pangs and trials ; our low spirits, our apprehensions, our occasional sadness, are throbs of His pain and passion : if God help us to bear them they make us like Him.

And *the shame*. There was a shame in that cross,—and we have *shame* ; acting up to our profession often brings a certain false shame. Are we bold for Christ ? do we boldly bear the shame the world would put upon us ? He boldly bore it on the cross ; there was no shrinking

from it; He met it openly, in the full day. Though the sun *would* not see it, men did, and looked, and scoffed. There was no hiding His doing His Father's will. How little there is of this in us! how little we share His shame! how many among the best of us do shrink from acting purely from love to God! how we are governed by a wish to please others, perhaps the good! but when *they* must be passed by, and we find God's Will first, we often feel ashamed, and fear their ill opinion more than we value God's Love. How little courage we have! how soon frightened! how often we are borne on, like winter leaves, upon the stream of the world's opinion and fashion! Oh for a free, an open, fearless heart! to meet the shame of the world's scoff as He met it! to stand alone, and hang only on Christ, and be independent of all the world besides! Too often we make more of an opinion than we do of God, more of a good man than we do of Christ. We are ashamed of going against an inclination, though we *know* it is wrong; we shrink from being thought singular, though we know it is right.

So suffer with Christ in these and many more ways, but these especially. His week of Passion, the prospect of sorrow, the giving up human ties,

the pain and loss of daily trial, the shame of the cross ; let us look out for all these ; they are ours, if we are Christ's, for all His is ours, and we are His.

But there was the dying ; there was a resting and a suffering, a reigning and a suffering, a King and a sorrower, a King in the act of dying, crowned, and throned, and a sufferer,—how much ! “There was no sorrow like unto His sorrow.”

So we ; we must die, die like Him ; like Him, thank God, in every thing. A good time this for His death-time, the early spring. So many die about early spring ; it is *the* time ; men most often die when the leaves come out, and the sun is like summer. He died now, perhaps, partly to comfort many a dying one in spring-time. We can remember, all of us, some who died at this time, slept in Jesus when the first sun shone warm, and we laid their cold remains where the first flowers bloomed.

So think of death. We must go through that, go through the *last* suffering *with* Him, then be with Him for ever and for ever. But if there be no suffering, there is no reigning there. Having suffered, we shall reign with Him. The last *suffering* is death, then are we with Him safely.

But we must bear *that*. And the reigning!
That is it which bears us through all; to be
with Him soon, "kings and priests for ever!"
"Know ye not the saints shall judge the world?"
Reigning with Him! Yes, that is enough in all
our trials, the prospect which lies before us.

SERMON IX.

THE WEEK OF PASSION.—HISTORICAL.

He is a man of sorrows.—ISAIAH liii. 3.

1. I WILL speak again of the week of His sorrow; the week of His sufferings Who died for us. Each day is marked by some patient hour of agony, which He who knew no sin bore for us who had sinned to the heart's core. Scarce an hour of the week but what the mark of His sorrows is left upon it, the print of His bleeding hands.

The events of His scene of death come crowding in upon us, quick and many; we are, as it were, in all the anxiety of those who attend on a death-bed pillow, and would not lose one word or look for worlds.

Each day grew more sad, more marked; we pass on from day to day with deeper interest; *each* act so full of meaning, so deeply full; even

the words of His enemies, and their least action towards Him, have a meaning far beyond what they themselves imagined. Do what they will, they must give witness to the Lord of glory.

Each day God grant we may be with Him ; follow Him, follow His blessed steps to Bethany, the village of Lazarus ; His silent walks at eventide over the sad hill of Olivet ; His last visit to His own Temple ; the deep, hidden meaning of His last conversation ; till we come to the evening of the last Supper, the feast of sorrow and the feast of love. Then may we come to His cross, the day of sorrows, the day of His long Agony,—so patiently borne,—the night in the garden, the walk through the streets, the denial of His few remaining friends, the loneliness of His trial, the mocking and scourging, the crowning with thorns, and the purple robe ; then the hard labour of the dying, the six long hours, the darkness,—when the sun would not see Him die,—the exceeding bitter cry ; and the close of all, the afternoon, when the setting sun shed its last pale beams upon the face of death, and that blessed Body, bloodless on the cross upon the silent hill. Then the Burial, and the twilight of that evening sinking on His rocky Tomb ; the shadows of the garden so suit-

ing the calm stillness of death,—now so still ; and the body just now stretched out in dying, now laid in rest, as of one sleeping. Sweet calm of death ! would that in this short day of His rest we may be with Him in His cold tomb, and as it were gaze on His Brow, wounded, but not bleeding ; His settled countenance of peace and love : and, while we gaze on Him, die to the world, and only live to Him.

Blessed Jesus, how shall we sinners draw near this holy week ? how dare we approach Thy last scenes ? Oh how we should be filled with love to Thee ; and while we see Thee and think of Thee in each sad scene, we may well feel,—“ Whom have I in heaven but Thee ? ” “ My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth after Thee in a dry and thirsty land ; ” “ My soul shall follow hard after Thee ; ” “ I will look on Thee and be satisfied, when I remember Thee on my bed and meditate on Thee in the night watches.”

Would that we might live near Thee this week by prayer, and fasting, and self-denial, and thought, and solitude ; so that we may get so near Thee as never to wish to leave Thee ; so to see Thy gracious face as to desire nothing else for ever ; so to know Thee as to find no other knowledge worth having ; and to be in love with

fasting and prayer, because through them we reach Thee. Blessed, most blessed, those who do ! Thou art all ; in Thee alone is life, and peace, and pardon, and rest for ever.

Let us follow Him through this blessed week, and gain a clear idea of what He did and suffered, that we may more easily fix our souls on Him throughout it ; for indeed this is hard to do : strange it should be hard, hard to remember Him, when He never forgets us ; hard to think of Him who in His Death thought of us. Forget Him ! forget Jesus of Nazareth ! forget Him in this wicked world, because it takes up our attention so much ! Forget Him ! “ If I forget Him, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember Him, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth ; if I prefer not Him in my mirth.”

2. It was on Saturday, March the 30th, that our blessed Lord reached Bethany, for in the year He died the Friday fell on April the 5th. He had been in Jerusalem, and the conversation with the Pharisees touching divorce had taken place ; He had crossed the Jordan on Friday ; the ford was twenty-three miles from Jerusalem ; the time, the day-week from His Death, like the river of death to us before we enter the heavenly Canaan.

After He had passed through the Jordan, He came to Jericho, nine miles from Jerusalem and seven from Bethany, the little village between it and Jerusalem, the village which Jesus loved, His last home on earth except the grave.

He stopped at the house of Zacchæus on Friday evening, and supped.

Things full of meaning gather close round His death, like bright vapours round the setting sun, borrowing all their light from Him. There were many present,—scoffers, friends greeting Him for the last time; sinners and publicans, apostles and harlots, penitents and watchers; Peter, Mary, Zacchæus, Simon, and Lazarus; likeness of the one eternal feast in heaven, where all shall sit down with Him who have on the wedding-garment.

He went the next day, Saturday, March the 30th, to Bethany. He entered it at evening. There seems to have been a supper that night as soon as He arrived. How sad, yet how striking, must have been the arrival of that little company. Jesus and His twelve companions were at sunset in the streets of Bethany, on His way to die; yet they did not clearly understand why He died; they followed, like children who see something is the matter when death is in a house, and do not quite know what.

It was, then, one week from the Saturday night that He reached Bethany with that little band by evening light,—that well-known company that had travelled so many a mile, through Galilee, Judæa, and Samaria, Jesus of Nazareth and His twelve disciples.

His hour had come! How much happens in one week! We walk with a man to-day who is buried this day week, a tenant of the grave! How much happened! what a change! That brow was unwounded now, that blessed Hand was unrent now; in the grave next Saturday it lay cold and bloodless; that side was firm now, next Saturday it had let out its last life-drop for you and me; that Arm was unwearied now, next Saturday it had bent under the cross and been torn with scourges; that face was full of love and tenderness now, eyes that could weep over Jerusalem, lips which could comfort Mary; then the eye was sunk and the voice still. Oh the change from life to death! the hush of death! how much to go through before that Sacred Form would be at rest! His hour, the hour He had talked of so often—"My hour"—had come. It needs an angel's sorrow to tell us how to sorrow enough.

He came to His friends before His death;

our friends come to us : we all love to draw near our own in dying ; we would not be without them ; and He would be like us in everything.

The supper, then, was on Saturday evening ; the supper where Lazarus sat at table, and Mary anointed His head for the burial, and washed His feet with her tears. The news of His being come had reached the town : the town was full to crowding ; it was the feast of the Jews, and all had come up. The fame of Jesus had gone far and wide ; the raising of Lazarus had been talked of everywhere, and all longed to see the Nazarene. It was known He was in Bethany, only two miles from the town, and Lazarus with Him. On Sunday morning the resort of the Jews began to the village, a short walk in spring-time over the slopes of mount Olivet. “ Now the feast of the Passover was nigh, and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover, that they might purify themselves. They were seeking for Jesus, and saying one with another as they stood in the temple,—What think ye ? that He will not come to the feast ? ” They all wanted to see Him ; some, perhaps, from curiosity, a few from love, and many from hatred. This made the Pharisees jealous and fearful. They were afraid of the people seeing

Lazarus; so they determined, at all events, to secure Him. Seeing the numbers going out to Bethany on Sunday morning, they gave command that if any one knew where He was they should declare it, that they might take Him.

Jesus in Bethany! All go to see Him. He is near us ever: would we were as anxious to go out to Him!

“Will He come to the feast?” Little did they know He *must* be there; He was that year’s Paschal Lamb. There is no faith, no true faith, in His Church without Him; no holy Sacrament without His body and blood. But they knew not the meaning of half they said; they said things and did things about Jesus which they understood not, but they were full of meaning; “they know not what they do.” Feasts are nothing without Him; the Sacrament is a *shadow* if we find not Christ there, if we do not discern the Lord’s body.

My object is to go through the order of events in Passion-week; or else how long might we linger on each scene in that last week of love and sorrow! how might an angel love to stay at Bethany, and trace each footstep of His, and revive each word of love! the supper, the sorrow of Mary, His full pardon, the words of Judas,

the discovery of the traitor, the gift of Mary, calling forth His praise, and Judas, from that moment till the Wednesday, keeping in his mind the determination to sell Him to the chief priests, the disciples little knowing what was coming, and blaming Mary for her costly gift, whose penitence opened wider her eye of faith. Had they known *what* was coming; could they that Saturday evening have seen next Thursday night, His agony on Friday, when the sun would set on His calm Form; that day week, when at the same hour His Body would lie so silent in the tomb,—would they have grudged the anointing? would they have given it to men and taken it from Him? I think not; worlds of treasure would have been too little then. But much had happened ere that; Judas was hanged, Peter weeping over his denial, all scattered, the blessed Virgin Mary in St. John's quiet home, Mary sitting over against the sepulchre, the Jews triumphant, and Jesus had died.

We come to Sunday morning—Palm Sunday. On the slope of mount Olivet, midway between Bethany and Jerusalem, lay Bethphage, perhaps a part of the same straggling village. News had reached the town that Jesus was coming in next day; a company of strangers had set out early

in the morning on the high road to Bethany to meet Him, the wonderful Prophet, Jesus of Nazareth, and His twelve disciples. "On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet Him, and cried, Hosanna : blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." St. John is very accurate in all his accounts of these scenes ; the disciple of love, he saw *more* than the rest.

We would remark here that His going on a Sunday morning had great meaning. All those events of His life which shewed especially His divine nature and teaching, were on a Sunday ; the transfiguration, the confession of His divinity by Peter, the sermon on the mount, the resurrection, the coming of the Holy Spirit, and St. John's being in the spirit ; so now He came into His own Temple on that day. The children praised Him, and the blind and lame in the temple were healed.

Peter and John were probably sent for the colt. The palm was the tree which earliest put forth its leaves in Judæa. He set out from Bethany, and met His disciples when they reached Bethphage.

They reach the descent of the mount of Olives, six stadii from the city, and had not yet crossed the Kedron, which was at the bottom of the hill. The disciples could no longer keep in their joy, but broke out into loud hosannahs and halleluias. Poor men ! they rejoiced at their Master's coming so gloriously into the city, little knowing it was *to die* ; little knowing that their hosannah was but the last faint echo on earth of that song which rung through heaven from ten thousand times ten thousand angels, whose eyes were fixed in rapturous gaze on that hill and Him who went along it,—the song of heaven, rolling on for ever.

By this time the whole multitude who were advancing from Jerusalem to see Jesus had come in sight of the little procession, and, as all crowds will, caught the spirit of the cry, and joined with the disciples in shouting "Hosannah to the Son of David !" casting their branches in the way. He was now surrounded by a vast number, who were pouring in streams from Jerusalem, and who turned back after Him, to follow the "Lamb to the slaughter^a." They reached the brow of the hill, and Jerusalem would come full in sight, lying in the hollow toward the

^a John xii. 17, 18 ; Luke xix. 37.

west, the light of the declining sun upon it : Jerusalem, with her Temple, the Temple which Solomon built, shining full in the light of afternoon, standing on the sacred hill, with the deep ravine below, and the mountains coming down on all sides upon it like everlasting guardians—"the hills stand round about Jerusalem ;"—Jerusalem, with her million of people and her yearly sacrifices, city of David, and the kings, and the prophets of old. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not !"

As they reached the top of the hill it would all come full upon them, and He, who came to it for the last time,—His own city, came to it to die,—"when He saw the city He wept over it." We can imagine what it was,—yet scarcely ;—Christ weeping over Jerusalem. When He saw her He loved her ; the Man of Sorrows weeping over Jerusalem. But we will not dwell on that now.

They did not see Him weep, for they went on shouting ; He wept alone ; perhaps angels saw Him, and loved to know and guard the spot of

earth where His tears fell ; perhaps they guard it now ; and it may be, ever since it has been some seraph's happy work to watch the spot where His tear was. The Arab's camel strays there now.

The whole city was shaken ; as He entered, the streets would be full, and the multitude would naturally join in the crowds which were around the prophet of Nazareth^b. The crowd and voices grew greater as He went on ; the cry rose louder ; children caught the cry, and seeing the branches wave before the temple gate, sang "Hosannah to the Son of David !" All the city was stirred, and said, "Who is this ?" Little children, His first martyrs ; children He held in His arms ; children met Him, and led Him into His Temple. And such are they in heaven, who sing the new song before the throne. Over His own He weeps, but over children He rejoiced.

He now reached the Temple, and without a question entered it. The Lord suddenly came to His Temple ; but He did nothing : looked round upon all things ; and when eventide was now come, He went out, and departed out of the city to Bethany.

^b John xii. 19.



Why did He come in? According to the law of Moses the Lamb of the Passover should be brought before God four days before it was sacrificed. On the tenth day of the first month the lamb was shut up in the house until the fourteenth day at even, and then it was slain. So Christ, the true Paschal Lamb, came in, and presented Himself before God in His house four days before He was offered, if we count to Thursday night, the feast of the Passover.

So we come to the evening of Palm-Sunday. We must go more quickly through the remaining events of Holy Week.

On the evening of Palm-Sunday He went back to Bethany: on Monday morning He returned to Jerusalem early with the disciples; on this day He cursed the barren fig-tree; He cleansed the temple, and taught in it afterwards. On Tuesday He spoke again of the fig-tree, heard the questions put to Him by the different sects, uttered the parable about the last day, and the discourse about the temple to His disciples on the way back.

Wednesday He seems probably to have spent in silence at Bethany.

On Thursday He returned to the city with the twelve, for the last supper at evening, in the upper room.

After it was over He went out to Mount Olivet, at midnight. He crossed the Kedron and entered the garden; the moon was now two days to full; the night was cold. Then came the Agony, and the *one* hour of silence. At one in the morning Judas came; He was taken to Annas, then to the Sanhedrin, which, ending with Peter's denial, brings us, in all probability, to three. Then He was sent to Pilate, —He seems to have been sent to Herod about seven. Then the scourging in public, the crown of thorns and the purple robe, the mocking, and the putting on His own robe. They set out for Calvary; they reached it—three quarters of a mile—at nine. There He was nailed to the cross, and they sat down to watch Him there. At twelve was the darkness and the silence, and at three He gave up the ghost, and the lamb was being offered in the city. He was crucified with His back to Jerusalem, and the sun would have come round to His face.

Then were the occurrences which happened at His death. The evening light fell full on Him; the struggle was over, the people gone back, and Calvary left alone with a few poor women, His mother, Mary Magdalene, and St. John. Then came Joseph, and took His blessed Body, and *laid it in the tomb*. How the calm of death fol-

lowed the agonies of dying ! the cause of anguish was removed, the wounds bloodless, and He laid still and cold in the tomb. The two Marys sat over against Him, the garden was silent, the twilight of evening sunk upon it, and the stir of the distant city was too far to disturb them.

So closed the day of sorrows.

May we spend each day with Him in fasting, and meditation, and prayer ; may He be with us, healing and pardoning with His precious blood.

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SERMON X.

THE EVENTS OF THE HOLY WEEK.

We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.—
1 COR. i. 23, 24.

WE are in the Holy Week, the week we have been long looking to, the week in which He died, the only hope of the sinner; the week all have kept holy at every time, and are keeping holy everywhere; the week St. James and St. Timothy kept; the week St. Athanasius and St. Chrysostom kept; the week our own husbands, and brethren, and children kept who are now in heaven. We will keep it. Oh that we could keep it better than we shall. But God forgive us, we will do our best, and if we fail, poor mariners of a stormy day as we are, He who excused those poor sleepers in the garden, He who turned and looked on Peter, He who bore so long with so many, will forgive it; "He knows our frame." We will do our best.

1. And now, first, "Why make so much of this week?" you say; "it is but a common week; why make so much of this above all others? It is all over now,—He does not suffer now; He is in heaven." Yes, but men always keep days on which great things happened, though those things are past. You do it for the day on which your husband died, then why not the day on which Christ died? Besides, God ordered men to do this very thing, this keeping of solemn days, long after the events they were kept to celebrate were past,—as the Passover. And is it not good to do it? Would you ever think of Christ's death and suffering as you do if it were not for these days set apart?

2. And now, what have we to think of? His suffering and death. Let all else be a trifle; let all food, and ease, and society, and amusement, be trifles; this week let our souls be wholly taken up in this one absorbing and overwhelming point, the death of Christ for us. Fix your eyes, then, on the cross, the nails, the crown of thorns, the spitting, the exceeding bitter cry, the agony, the comforting, the angel, the last supper, the betrayal and the forsaking, the darkness, the yielding up the ghost, and the

burial. Fix your eyes on all this, and let everything else be forgotten; in this is your salvation. "By His stripes we are healed;" "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities;" He "was the captain of our salvation, made perfect through suffering." "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins."

Yes, let that be the beginning and end of all this week: "Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness. But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

"To the Greeks foolishness." It seems foolishness to the world to think of Christ crucified, but to you who believe it is the wisdom and power of God.

And now let us follow Him on in His week of sorrows, and get our heart into its tone. It may seem difficult at first, but by the last day you will have got accustomed to this sacred and holy week. May be you will leave it with regret, and feel it has been like living with *Christ* alone in His tomb.

1. His ministry had lasted three years in all. It began at a Passover, and ended at that great Passover at which He was the Paschal Lamb. These three years were bounded thus:—The first ended with the call of St. Matthew; the second with that discourse of His when they took up stones to stone Him; and the third, with His crucifixion. These years are full of significant events, each of which seems for some particular reason to belong to the year it happened in.

The country He ministered in was the Holy Land. It was a hilly and rocky country, from Damascus to the Dead Sea. In the shadows of its retired valleys, among its rude and irregular hills, He loved to linger; now by Nazareth, now near Nain; Jerusalem itself lay among hills:—“As the hills stand round about Jerusalem, so the Lord standeth round about His people.”

Along one side rolled the great sea, and overlooking it the solitary peak of Mount Carmel, Tyre and Sidon, Joppa and Cæsarea: on the other rolled the gentle waters of the Jordan, the sacred river; its thin thread of waters might be seen as you ascended any of the hills which shut in the Holy Land. The upper end of the Jordan opened out into the sea of Galilee, a

long and narrow water, where He often was, on one side closed by a rocky and precipitous shore, on the other, by a sloping and green shore. There was a gully in the middle of it, down which the strong winds often came with unusual violence, and made its passage dangerous. It was that wind He lulled, and that storm which He bade be still. There walked St. Peter on the water; there St. John mended his nets on the sandy shore. There, on a smiling beach, rose the little picturesque village of Capernaum, and Tiberias on the other side. In the former town was the bar where St. Matthew used to take the toll. By that sea He loved to wander. There was the multitude of fishes, near it the scene to which He retired to pray; there, too, the multitude were fed; and there, after the resurrection, He in the early morning appeared to the disciples, and they did not know Him. At the other end of the Jordan a wild tract of land extended its bare surface without a tree or a shrub; there prowled the wild beasts, who were with Him in His temptation; there, too, fell the heavy plunge of the Dead Sea, whose waters rolled over the ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Such was the Holy Land, the land His sacred

feet have trod ; and such is it now. The ground is still there.

Near the Jordan, not far from where the Dead Sea rolls, a road runs from one town to the other, often traversed by the Jew ; there are the hills, the scene of the narrative in the Bible of the good Samaritan. On this road, and outside Jericho, stood the house of Zacchæus. As you approach Jerusalem, you come in sight of a gentle, sloping hill, which shuts out the holy city from the traveller. This hill is called the Mount of Olives, and on the slopes, which you would come to on going from Jericho to Jerusalem, lies the retired and secluded village of Bethany, a very small village about a mile from Jerusalem, where a few families lived of the poorer kind, as we often see in suburbs ; there was the home of Mary and Martha, and there the house of Simon the Leper. As a traveller advances, the road leads up to the Mount of Olives, which presently breaks off, and one part goes to another village, called Bethphage, where the priests lived ; and the other branches off to Jerusalem. This was scarcely more than a beaten foot-path, such as we often see outside a great town leading to a neighbouring village, where, on summer evenings, the inhabitants of towns are wont to wander and

to walk. Still the traveller does see Jerusalem. Ascending this path you reach the top of the hill, which on every side is covered with gardens, where the people of the town loved to walk. They were public gardens, locked up at night and on the Sabbath. There was Gethsemane. At the top of the hill, beyond a deep valley, at the bottom of which rolls the brook Kedron, channelling the valley of Jehoshaphat, lies Jerusalem, the city of God, the holy city. "Peace be to Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee." It is a glorious sight, they say, to see Jerusalem, Mount Moriah, and the temple, with its roof glowing with gold. Beyond, towards the west, lay Mount Calvary, opposite the Mount of Olives.

I have thus described the Holy Land, that we may through this week tread with Him in His footsteps, and follow Him in all His sojourn of love and sorrow.

On the Thursday before Holy Week, our blessed Lord had been on the other side the Jordan; it seems on the Friday morning He left it, and proceeded to Jericho, which lies a few miles from it. The twelve were with Him, and the company who had together travelled so many miles of land, were now setting out on their last

journey together, though they little knew what was going to be.

You will find in Matt. xx. 20 the account of all this. On that morning, it seems, He held the conversation with Salome, and entered Jericho in the evening, when the two blind men addressed Him, and He healed them. On Friday He seems to have come to Zacchæus' house, which lay out of the town, under some sycamore trees. Attracted by His miracles and His name, a great multitude came out of the town after Him,—with very different feelings, doubtless,—but all followed Him.

And here we would linger a moment to catch a lesson of which all the events of this time of suffering are full. In all His sufferings He had one object in view,—the saving us. He shewed that at every point; it could not be hid; His own suffering did not keep it back; our continual ingratitude did not quench it. The twelve were around Him. They approached the trees; and His eyes, now resting on the multitude, now on His disciples, were fixed on the point where the sycamore-tree arose. Zacchæus had climbed up into the tree; seeing the multitude coming along the road, and anxious to see Him of whom Judæa was full. In that tree Jesus saw him,

and bid him come down, for He would tarry with him, and above all, that salvation was come to his house.

How this arouses and encourages us! "He came to seek and to save;" to seek, to look out for those who never knew how to seek Him, but who longed to do so in their secret heart. He knew the heart, and He knows it now; and He seeks the sinner who, amid the haunts or society, the bustle of the world, the accusation of evil spirits, is afraid of coming to Him openly: His eye is on us; His eye is on you who are most unknown, and will find you out. Christ is always looking after you; by each thing which happens to you is He seeking you; more events are by His direct ordering than you would imagine. He bears longer with you than you can think; often when you are in doubt He turns the scale, by ordering the event; He looks out for you.

Those who least expect Him He seeks and finds. Zacchæus did not think that morning that salvation would come to his house. Those who are least likely are the ones whom He often best loves and seeks.

When at the dinner He uttered that parable *about the king going away and leaving his talents*

to his servants, it had to do with His going away ; and you are the servants. You have got to reckon with Him yet.

That feast was remarkable. He filled His parting hours with feasts ; scenes of the world's joy He has signed with His cross ; He left its shadow on all ; and we are to feast, but not be too joyous.

What he did on the Saturday we are not told. He seems to have stayed at the house of Zacchæus, for it was the Sabbath. How full of feeling and pensive thought to those who could have known all, would that sojourning company have been ; those thirteen who had walked so many weary miles together, been seen by so many multitudes, and had drawn together so great a crowd to gaze on miracles. The multitude appear to have left the company before they got to Bethany. It would be evening, and dark, when they reached the village, and the lights would begin to shine from the houses of the village. He seems to have gone first to Mary's house. They expected Him, for there seems to have been some friends present who had heard of the raising of Lazarus. It was at this feast, this evening's supper, that they anointed His head and washed His feet.

News had now spread to Jerusalem that He was near, and intended next morning to come there. Accordingly, the first thing in the morning great multitudes went out to meet Him, and He set off early with the twelve, to go over the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem. He had not gone far before He met the two disciples with the ass's colt.

The arrest, the weeping, the great multitudes, the palm-branches, the city moved, the visit to the temple. Such are the events of to-day.

We have entered on the Holy Week. Let us keep it as we should, we shall find the blessing. It is very short, and these very short times are our help, for it is easier to keep a short time strictly ; yet a short time kept strictly is a help to keeping a long time well.

1. Let us all come to church daily, and in the evenings trace His steps through the events of this holy time.

2. Let us strictly examine ourselves, as if we were expecting Him to come as our King, to judge us, as well as to die for us.

3. Let us spend it quietly. Let all feel it is the Holy Week ; and though work must go on, still let us all keep our tongues quiet from *slander and evil speaking* ; let us specially go-

vern each member, and each sense, this week ; let us be more than usually careful ; when an unkind thing *might be* said, let us *not* say it ; when we might indulge in pleasure, let us put it by ; when a thing might be done which looks doubtful, let us decide against our pleasure, rigidly and sincerely.

SERMON XI.

PALM SUNDAY.

CHRIST REASONING WITH US IN HIS PASSION.

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.—ISAIAH i. 18.

1. NEXT Sunday will be Easter, the glorious morning, the day of birth, and resurrection, and hope.

But we have the week of sorrows to go through first, the week of weeks, the week which of all the year has most to do with the sinner, has most to do with Christ's suffering and His human nature.

We have now to pass that, and to pass it in sorrow, and penitence, and prayer. May the world not hinder us ; may we not suffer it to disturb us ; may we draw away from it ; may we try to be alone, or when with others, to be alone with God in thought.

Do not let the world take you from Christ ;

do not let the cares and pleasures of life draw you from Him; do give this one week to entire devotion. You will be *for ever* with Him, if you have what you say you want. Then do not now grudge one week's devotion in the passing year. He will some day be *all* to you,—more than father and mother, wife or child; the whole world will seem a trifle, a show, a dream, less than nothing, compared with one look of His eye, one smile of His approval. When the judgment is set, and the books are opened, what will you do if He does not love you, if He will not pardon you? Then why not seek Him now? He has given Himself to you this week; He has opened His sacred body by wounds, that you may come and hide yourself in it. He has drawn you to Him by a love you never shewed to your dearest child, nor one man ever shewed to another,—“In that while we were yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly.” What do you want more to convince you of His love, than what He has done for you?

This week is the height of His love. You never saw Him, yet He loved you; you were unborn, yet He saw you. He saw you in future, and saw you would sin, yet He loved you. He saw your rebellious temper, your vile impurities,

and shameful neglect, yet He loved you. He loved you, but that was not all—He gave Himself for you. The love of Christ passeth knowledge; He set a price on your soul higher than you set yourself. His love! behold its marks, its signs: the silent, solitary Mount of Olives; the having but twelve, and one a traitor; the sorrow of that last supper; the bitterness of that agony and that passion which wrung His gracious soul next Thursday in the garden; the denial of Peter; the wild abusing; the smiting of His Face; the being brought out in the purple robe and crown of thorns, to be buffeted by His own; the bitter scourging; the fainting beneath the cross; the going forth; the nailing; the mount of death; the being forsaken; the bowing His head; the silent rocky sepulchre; the bleeding Body; and the tomb of death.

What signs want you more? If any man did all this for you, would you not say he loved you? if he did it when you hated him, would you not say he loved you? All this He did for you, because He longed to bring you to heaven;—hearts of stone, which will not melt; ears of lead, which will not hear! “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” “Was ever sorrow like unto My sorrow?”

Come then this week, and dwell on this. He calls you; come aside out of the world a little while; come and talk with Him alone.

“Come, and let us *reason* together.” Come to My cross; come aside to Passion-week; come to Gethsemane, to the judgment-hall, to Golgotha, to the new Tomb; come, and let us be alone. He says, Come and talk with Me;—“Come, and let us *reason* together. . . . Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

Who can refuse such a call? Who can say he will not come? See His pleading:—Come and reason with Me while I am bleeding, while I am dying, while I am scorned. Come, and let Me *plead* with you. You have the advantage: I am in suffering, and all for you;—you cannot say I have the advantage, for while I am suffering, you have been sinning. “Come, let us *reason* together.”

Let us then dwell on this. It is a good text for holy-week, for Palm Sunday, as we are entering on that time,—Christ reasoning with us by His death, by His sufferings, His intense anguish. It is more than telling us what is right; it is pleading with us about it, shewing it us all ways, persuading us.

God ever loved this mode; so Micah says: "Hear ye, O mountains, the Lord's controversy, for the Lord hath a controversy with His people." But it is to be among the mountains, in solitude, away from the world. God would reason with us, but it must be alone;—"He will plead with Israel." And now, how will He plead? "O My people, what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against Me. I brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants." So He vouchsafed to plead; so God stoops to reason with His people alone. It must be alone,—it must be among the mountains.

Again, God pleaded with Abraham. He stayed at the tent-door; He was willing to be pleaded with about Sodom; He waited to be gracious. "Come, let us reason together:" I will hear the plea, all that can be said; I wait to be gracious:—"If there be ten righteous, I will not destroy it for ten's sake."

So again Hosea. Hear the Lord pleading: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called him out of Egypt; I taught Ephraim to go, taking him by the arms: I drew them with the cords of a man, and with the bands of

love. How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim? I am the Lord thy God, from the land of Egypt."

God's way is ever to plead, to reason with us, —long-suffering, forbearing. He sees how perverse we are; He sees we will not take the right way, though we see it and know it. He gives a law, and we will not walk in it, and He might fairly cast us off; but He does not; He consents to reason with us, to do all He can to persuade us to turn. And mark, this reasoning has ever to do with pardon. He yearns to pardon us:—"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Now how does He plead? Ever by drawing us away from the world, and getting us alone, —by calling us to be separate.

1. When we are sick and ill, and laid on a bed of weakness, and taken from our usual work, and from our companions, and haunts, and ways, then it is as though He said, "Come, let us reason together;" come aside with Me. You will not reason, you will not listen to Me in the busy world; you are too much taken up to hear My voice; you have no care for that. But for all that, I will not give you up; I will draw you

out of the world ; I will lay you low, and make you ill, and in the silent quietness of your sick chamber I will come in and find you quiet, find you alone, find you ready to talk with Me, and then in your sickness I will *reason* with you. "Come, let us reason together."—Blessed sickness, blessed illness ! Sad to lay aside our weakness, if by that we are away from His gracious reasoning ; and such *is* illness—God longing to be one with us.

2. So is bereavement, loss, and death. It is God calling us aside to reason with us. He finds we are too engaged with some earthly object—we have no time, no ear for Him. He would have us listen to Him alone, and so He takes away the object of our love, to have us all to Himself. "Come, let us reason together."

3. So in seasons of denial,—in fasts, in Lent, in times of humiliation,—it is all that God may get our ear, our undivided attention : we are more prepared to listen to Him then, we have less to do with the world and the body, less with man ; we are in retirement, and God is able to come in to *reason* with us. So Mary Magdalen sat still in the house when He came, *the Master* ; and in that still house she was more ready to re-

ceive His visit than anywhere else ; in loneliness and solitariness.

“ Behold I stand at the door and knock.” He would come in and reason with us, and speak to us of sin, and plead with us to turn to Him. “ Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”


Such is His way. And now of the things He will plead with us about. We see how God did plead with His people about all He had done for them. So surely a good night this to call us to reason, the night before the week when He did more for us than at any other time. Come and hear Him plead with you,—“ By His agony and bloody sweat, by His cross and passion, by His precious death and burial ;” and if that does not induce you to turn to Him, what will ?

“ *Reason together,*”—He asks you to come after Him, and you refuse to follow. He says, “ Come unto Me,” and you will not go. Here is a request, but you are deaf to it,—the drunkard is a drunkard still, the worldling a worldling still, the despiser and passer-by of the Lord’s Supper still turns away ; the impure are still impure, and the jealous jealous still.

Enticing does not do, and He tries command ;

He gives His law, but men heed it not ; they sin still. Whether He speaks by entreaty or law, it is the same,—we are too often still wayward, still perverse ; we will go our own way, and, like the deaf adder, stop our ears, refusing to hear the voice of the Charmer, charm He never so wisely.

He tries a third way,—expostulation, reasoning together :—“ Come, let us reason together.” What are the reasons for which you will not come, why you will not follow My entreaty, nor obey My law ? Come aside with Me this week, and in the stillness of My sorrows, in the large upper chamber, in the quiet night, in the midnight shades of cold Gethsemane, in the pathway of Mount Olivet, on the forsaken cross of Calvary, in the stillness of My rocky Tomb. Come aside with Me, tell Me your reasons why you will not follow Me, and I will reason with you, shew you your mistake ; I will bear with you to the last, and all to forgive your sins. “ Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

I have called, and you have not answered, though I have heaven and hell in My hands ;  is in My hands, your enjoyment

of happiness or being is at My disposal, but you will not listen to Me. Why? you fear, if you turn to Me, you must give up many a pleasure of the body,—you must become moderate, give up overmuch eating and drinking, live a simpler life, fare more simply, and not indulge as you now do? And for the sake of indulging the body you will forego heaven for ever? Come, let us reason together this week, poor sensual sinner. See My body this week: no food, no luxury; the supper at Bethany, where I sat last night, only tears then, and a traitor present among my friends; the last supper, no thought of food then: My work to wash their feet. See the thirst of My last hour,—nought to drink but vinegar in mockery; vinegar untasted, lest it might slake My thirst, or lest I should suffer something less for you. Hungry was I this week, but the very fig-tree refused her fruit, and mocked Me with its fruitless leaves; hungry, after the cold night in the garden, but I was hurried from the chief priest's to the judgment-hall; no time for rest. All this I bore this week for you; I gave up all thought of Myself for you. Then how *can* you make that a hindrance to giving up all for Me? How can you retain one bodily comfort which might stand in your way of coming to Me? And

bodily comforts do often stand in our way when we refuse to consider the poor, or are self-indulgent. Then look at Me this week, giving up all, and begin to give up something. "Come, let us reason together." See Me, for your sake, bear the cross for you, do you bear the same. Why should I suffer all this? It was for the price of your soul. See, then, how dearly I counted that.—Yes! He could see into the terrible agonies of hell, and seeing what they were, could not bear that you should go there, but came to die instead of you,—suffered, thirsted, had nothing to drink, was parched, and refused to drink, that you might be saved from being where there is not a drop of cold water. Can you refuse this reasoning, this pleading, this week?

Is it dislike to exertion that keeps you back? You do not like prayer and devotion; you do not like stated hours and times of coming to church; it is irksome,—sleep interposes; or you are too idle. "Come, let us reason together." Did He spare His body this week? *Not once.* Up all night in the cold olive-garden praying for you; by the bloody sweat weakened and exhausted for you; bent down and faint beneath His heavy cross—all for you. They stretched out His worn frame on the rough tree; they fastened His

sacred hands to the wood, and let them bear the whole weight of His blessed Body. He hung there, worn out, and the very sun went in, and the stars came out to lull Him to rest, as if Heaven pitied Him, and would look like night, to give Him sleep, to give Him repose. “*But He took no rest*” till death rested Him, and then the grave was His bed, and the hewn rock His pillow. And why all this? All for your sake, and yet you can refuse to give Him your best, because you fear exertion and discipline to your body.—“Come, let us reason together.” See what I bore; see what I went through for you; and cannot you rise a little earlier, retire for prayers at night a little earlier, give your body a little more fatigue for My sake, when I did all for yours? Hear the reason of it:—“Come, let us reason together. . . . Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

Is it shame keeps you back from Me? Do you fear being laughed at by old companions, or the world saying you are deceitful, you are not true? Is it fear of man, and shame? “Come, let us reason together.” Come aside, alone with Me one short week; look at Me, be with Me, and let us reason together. Was I ashamed

for your sake? I “endured the cross, despising the shame.” They spat on Me, they smote My face, they secretly struck Me; I carried My cross, I died a shameful death, I was despised and rejected of men, I hung as a malefactor between two thieves. Shame! had not I enough, and all for you? then why not you for Me? Shame! let not that be a reason.—“Come, let us reason together.” He will not be hard, He will consider your reason, He will talk with you, He will reason with you.

Is it your exceeding sinfulness keeps you back? that you think I cannot forgive,—that your sins are too many, too black, too dark, too vile? that My blood cannot pardon? “Come, let us reason together.” Come, and gaze awhile at My sufferings this week; see if I could have borne so much, if I had not loved you; and if I love so much, how will I not forgive you all things? Come, and reason with Me, deep and guilty sinners, who hold back; come and reason with Me this sacred week, in silence, and sorrow, and solitude. “Come, let us reason together. . . . Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

Is it carelessness keeps you back? Do you

not *care* for your soul? is it not worth saving? are you reckless of it? Is the world so attractive, that heaven and hell seem trifles? Is it that you have no care for your soul? Come, reason with Me; see what I bore this week; gaze awhile on that. Why was it? For your sake—all: I counted your soul precious; I thought hell would be so awful for you, heaven so happy, that it was worth while to go through all this for you. And what I thought so much of, that My rough cross, My bleeding form, My silent sepulchre, were not too much to purchase then, should you count not worth a struggle, not worth giving up the world a little time for? Come and reason with Me this week; come and gaze on Me and My sufferings. Learn that it was for you. If you had been the only sinner in the world, I would have borne it all for you. Then learn the value of *your* soul, when you see *My* sufferings; and learn here, at My cross, that if I paid so dearly for you, it is worth your while to give up the world and carelessness.

Go this week, and let Him reason with you; go to Him, I pray you, for time is short. He is standing outside your door, waiting to *reason with you*, to persuade you, to talk with you patiently, to shew you the error of your ways. Go

to Him ; be with Him this week in prayer, in solitude, in church when open, in church at service ; when at work with those you work with, by silent, secret prayer. Let Him reason with you, for He wishes to save you ; He waits to be gracious ; He stands at your door and knocks. He says the same to one and the same to all : " Come, let us reason together. . . . Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."


SERMON XII.

THE BARREN FIG-TREE.

He spake also this parable : A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard ; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.—LUKE xiii. 6.

It is the last Sunday of the old year ; a day or two more, and that year, with all its sins, all its sorrows, all its warnings, all its opportunities, neglected or used, will have gone to bear its witness at the bar of God ! A single year is often enough to change the whole appearance of human life ; a single year will often unfold events which may change our habitations, our employments, our associates, our hopes, our fears, our all ; a single year is enough to make a rich man poor, a healthy man sick ; a single year can make a wife a widow, a child an orphan. In the last year, how many have had their all changed ! how many *are* in sorrow who *were* in prosperity ! how many are mourning over the friends they

loved ! how many a father weeps over a departed child, and how many a grave rises in fresh hillocks in our parish churchyard ! How many *are* dead who *were* alive ! New-dug graves arise amid the dead in yonder churchyard, to remind a coming day of our fellow-parishioners. To-morrow one more shall raise its clay-cold covering above another. They are gone from the din and stir of life,—that din is heard by us, but *their* ears are closed ; they partake its strife no more ! they are gone to their final resting-place,—the grey-haired grandsire, and the girl in her youth and health ; the partner of the morning of life, and the youngest son of an affectionate father,—gone from the friends who loved them, and their places that knew them shall know them no more !—gone with the dead of the passing year, who were alive and in health at its beginning,—gone from the narrow precincts of our hamlet, to give their account to God ! Another year ; and how many may follow them,—how many of the healthy may be cold and still ! Another year, and the father may be by his child, and the brother lie by his brother's side ; in one churchyard they may mingle with one dust ; and he who *follows to-morrow's* funeral may be followed ere another



year is gone ! For “ what is your life ? it is even as a vapour which soon passeth away ! ” “ The end of all things is at hand.”

With these reflections, with these solemn warnings, with these voices still speaking in our ears,—and what voice shall speak so solemnly as the voice of a death-bed, what so fitly can ring the knell of a departing year !—let us examine the solemn meaning of the parable of the fig-tree.

I will consider the planting of the fig-tree, the state of the fig-tree, the condemnation of the fig-tree, and the preservation of it to another year.

a. “ A certain man,” then, “ had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard.” We read in the second chapter of Genesis, that “ the Lord planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man that He had formed.” If we look literally and closely into the parable, we might apply this text : for the “ certain man ” is here intended to represent God, our Maker, and the vineyard the world which He made. But however, we often find the earth or its inhabitants compared to a vineyard or its vines. Thus David : “ Return, we beseech Thee, O God of

hosts : look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine ; and the vineyard which Thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that 'Thou madest so strong for Thyself^a.' Again, Isaiah says ; " For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant^b." And again, Jeremiah, speaking of Israel, says ; " I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed : how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto Me^c?"

These, and other passages, serve to throw light on the meaning of the opening passage of this parable ; that the " certain man " intends God, and the vineyard the world which He has made, and the fig-tree which He planted in it, the men whom God has created ; we, whom the Lord God has placed in this world, which is His vineyard. And what has He placed us here for ? Is it that we should spoil the beauty of His vineyard, and mar the symmetry of it ? is it that we should grow and live for ourselves alone, or for Him who placed us here ? Does a man ever plant trees in his garden or his vineyard save to

^a Ps. lxxx. 14, 15.

^b Isa. v. 7.

^c Jer. ii. 21.

be its ornament, and beauty, and benefit? Are you an ornament to God's world? are you doing what God placed you here to do? are you living for God, or for your ownself?

But mark one thing before we leave this part of our text. There was only one fig-tree planted in the vineyard; i. e. there was one fig-tree among many vines; and now turn and look on the world which God has made, and behold, there is but one reasonable creature among many other creatures of His planting; and as the one fig-tree was the only barren growth in the vineyard, so is man the only rebel on the face of God's creation. So the concluding chapters of the book of Job set forth the obedience of God's creation.

β. And this brings us to the second point in our text—the state of the fig-tree.

He came seeking fruit thereon, and found none. Year succeeded year, and still the barren tree bared its fruitless branches to the wind of winter and the genial warmth of summer; no sunshine would make it bud, no fertilizing showers would make it blossom; toil and labour, pruning and digging, had all been of no avail; the barren fig-tree was barren still, a weight and encumbrance to the soil of the vineyard.

Compare the case of the vineyard with the case of us whom God has placed and planted in this His world.

Like the owner of the vineyard of the parable, God comes to seek fruit upon us. We frequently, in holy Scripture, find the works of man compared with fruit. There will be no difficulty, therefore, in determining what is the intended meaning of the fruit of the parable. "Ye shall know men," says our Lord, "by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." And again, St. John the Baptist says: "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." "Bring forth fruit meet for repentance"—speaking plainly of the works of those persons who were attending his preaching.

These words, then, make no doubt that the fruitless fig-tree is meant to be a figure and representation of men who are living in God's world without doing God's works.

We might take the barren fig-tree as a picture of the whole world, since it appears plainly enough from the Bible that the whole world "lieth

in wickedness," "there is none that doeth good; no, not one." For the Lord looketh down from heaven upon the children of men, and finds this to be the case.

But let us draw the circle within a narrower compass. When we talk of the whole world being wicked, men lose sight of the fact of their ownelves being wicked. Let me apply the question to each individual. How many of you are like barren trees? on how many of you does the Lord look down from heaven and find you bearing no fruit, doing no good, improving in no particular? "There is none that doeth good; no, not one." Let me take the characters of those among whom you live,—what is the aim and object of most? and then answer for yourself, if most are doing God's work or no.

What is one man? A swearer; in his common conversation blaspheming God's name so continually and habitually, that he scarcely knows when he does it, and has well-nigh lost all consciousness of its being wrong. Or what is another? A liar; deceiving and flattering with his tongue; denying the truth if he has been guilty of any mischief or dishonesty, glorying in the cleverness with which he throws the blame on others; inventing falsehoods to entertain his

companions ; taking advantage of certain things which do occur, wilfully to misstate, aggravate, ruin, or slander. And another is a drunkard, another a glutton—both lending a hand to self-murder. Another is a gambler, a duellist, an adulterer. Take these characters, take the generality of persons about you, and say, are they not such as these? and are such as these bringing forth the fruit of good living, which God would have them to do? Every conscience must answer, No! Every candid mind that knows anything, feels anything, or wishes anything of what is right, must answer that such as these are not bringing forth fruit, that they are barren fig-trees, stretching out their bare and naked arms to heaven, exposed to every blast of God's displeasure, and every cloud of His divine and righteous anger.

Nor does it matter if most persons are not outwardly as bad as all that; if they be not swearers, liars, or drunkards; however in many cases the flood of natural corruption may be kept in by the laws of the land, the restraints of society, the general feeling of men around us; however, from good principles, early given in education, such a man may shine out in all that is kind, amiable, affectionate, generous, benevo-

lent, and humane ! however he may conscientiously fulfil his duty to his neighbour, and be widely different from the generality of characters of profligacy around him ; still he cannot abide the scrutiny of the balance of the heavenly sanctuary ; and when the exceeding broad banner of God's most holy law is unfurled and displayed, even he must be proclaimed a sinner, lost and helpless, wretched, and miserable, poor, and blind, and naked, in the sight of God.

Thus there are scarcely any bearing the fruit that they ought to bear.

Such being the case, perhaps some one says, where is the use of holding up the tale for instruction ? how can any one be otherwise than a barren fig-tree ?

No lesson of the Bible has been given which it is beyond our power to reach ; and it therefore rests with us to consider how we can bear fruit, how we are to cease to be barren trees.

We can, by the grace and help of God. I do not mean that we ever can so act as that our actions shall bear the scrutiny of God's awful eye uncleansed in the blood of Jesus Christ ; for even our best doings are but as filthy rags, and can stand us in no stead to counteract the effects of a single sin. But there is a certain state of the

heart of man which God expects to see, which God is pleased to see ; for the absence of which we shall be punished, and the presence of which will ensure our eternal happiness.

And what is that ? It is preparing for death ; it is going in prayer to Jesus Christ to be forgiven ; it is consenting to give up the yoke of sin, and consenting to wear the yoke of Christ ; it is being filled with God's Holy Spirit, which shall make us holy, good, kind, meek, patient, gentle, long-suffering ; it is meaning what we say, and trying to practise what we profess ; it is making religion our object, not our instrument ; it is acting honestly and candidly, with God's help, up to our conscience : it is considering that when we have done all we are unprofitable servants ; it is hating sin, though we commit it, weeping over it when we have done it, repenting of it by intending better for the future, as well as regretting the past ; it is loving God's word, God's people, God's house, and making them our pleasure, object, and delight ; it is looking to eternity, not to time ; living for heaven, not for earth ; serving God, not our own pleasure ; providing for a dying hour, looking forward to the moment of our parting breath and final judgment ; it is being

despised, rejected, and laughed at, and minding it not ; bearing the reproach of Christ, and considering it our highest privilege ; it is receiving it all with meekness and forgiveness, without resentment, without complaint, without murmuring ; it is getting better, not getting worse ; getting more freed from earth, more bound to heaven. This is serving God, this is bearing fruit, this is preparing for death, this is going to heaven. And all this is shewn by growing in, and possessing in our daily conduct, the fruits of the Spirit, which are these : “ love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”

Is this *your character* ? is this the way in which you are living ? are you thus bearing fruit ?

γ. But again : “ Then said he to the dresser of the vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none ; cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground.”

In these words we read the condemnation of the fig-tree. Why should it occupy the room of better trees ? why should it drink the nurture of a soil it makes no use of ? Cut it down ; cast to the fire its leafless boughs.

In these words do we only read the condemna-

tion of the fig-tree? do we not read *your* condemnation? Another year has rolled its hours away, another portion of our life has gone, another chain of opportunities has been broken not to be rejoined. You are a year older, a year nearer death, perhaps a year weaker in health, and strength, and spirits; you are a year wiser in life's experience; you are a year wiser in God's judgments, mercies, and warnings. Are you a year better, or a year worse? are you a year nearer to heaven, or to hell? Candidly, honestly, answer that question, as you hope to be saved. Souls have gone away who were here a year ago; more than one who listened to this question, who lived in this parish, who were alive, and healthy, and strong, and happy *then*, are gone away. They did not think then *it was* their last year on earth; *but it was*; you do not think so now, *but it may be*; you think it as little now as they did then; but they are gone, you cannot call them back; the place that knew them, shall know them no more. Could they come back, would they not join their voice with mine to bid you *prepare*, to tell you it was worth while to gain heaven, to avoid hell; to make Christ our friend, by giving up life, short life, to religion? Oh yes, they would. How little they thought then how soon

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it would be *their turn* ; how little they thought then that *they were* to be the ones to go ! How little *you* think it *now* ! But yet you may be among the dead of the coming year ; a fever may kill you ; you may be wasted by consumption, you may die a sudden death. Oh, if this is to be your *last year on earth*, are you fit to go ? If your last year of being spared has passed away, have you made the best use of it ? If God is now saying, “ Cut him down ; ” if now the cough is on you, which shall in a few weeks kill you ; if now your blood is heated by the fever which shall bring you shortly to a dying bed ; if now the air of infection has been breathed in which shall work your death, are you more prepared to-day than you were the last day of last year ?

• These are solemn questions, awful questions. Do not neglect to answer them. *The lost*, those who in this year have been consigned to hell, *would* answer them if they *could*. You have another opportunity, *they have none* !

Then, if God is looking, as He is, into your heart, to see if you are bearing fruit more than last year ; have you made use of the warnings, the many warnings,—the deaths of others, the sermons you have heard, the books you have read, the impressions you have received ? have

you used them to the best advantage? are you bearing fruit more than you were then? There is no time for trifling; the end of all things is too near at hand, everlasting ages are too long, hell too terrible, and heaven too happy, to make it worth your while to trifle any more.

But there is yet a part of the parable to consider. "And the dresser of the vineyard answering said unto Him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."

Here is the sparing of the barren fig-tree, through the intercession of the gardener.

And why is it that you have been hitherto spared? why is it you were not cut off years ago? why is it you are still well, still living, still able to think, to read, to pray? why, save that you "have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous?" Why is it save that He loves you? in that while you were sinners, He gave Himself for you? that He cannot bear that you should perish, or that any one of you should be plucked out of His hands? Here then is love; not that we loved Him, but that He loved us, and gave Himself to be the propitiation for our sins. Like the gardener of the vineyard, He has

done His best ; He has toiled for years on earth to save you, by His sufferings, His agony, and His death ; and even now He has worked for you from your infancy, by warnings, mercies, and blessings, unnumbered and undeserved, to spare your soul from ruin, to rescue you from the torment of the lost. “ Who is so great a God as our God ? ” who have we in heaven but Him, and whom on earth shall we desire in comparison of Him ?—long-suffering, gracious, and merciful, saving to the uttermost all who come to Him.

This is why you were not lost long ago ; this is why you are not in eternal punishment now ; this is why even to-day, before you enter on another guilty year, you are not cut off, but spared a little longer. He will dig around you, and prepare your soil now ; He will try you, chasten you, warn you, bless you ; He will spare no pains to save your soul, so as only you will make the best of what He does.

In conclusion, a word to two or three classes.

1. I speak to some who last year, perhaps, were sunk in lust, and sin, and every evil way, who may have had reason to turn to better habits since the year began. Maybe a friend's death has touched you ; perhaps your mind has been struck by some religious truth, and the last

year has been the means of making you think better. How do you know but what that very event was the beginning of the one year more? that then God had determined to cut you off, but that the prayer of Christ had gained you life for yet another year? If so, your time is short, make the best of it; you *may* be saved at last, if you keep on in the way you have begun.

2. I may speak to others who have been longer in better ways, who have tried in the past, and still wish in the coming year, to give their time to God. Draw not back; if sin and weakness are strong, be not discouraged, but go on, and you shall be safe in Jesus if only you persevere. He that has begun the good work in you will continue it till years no longer mark duration, or time divide us from eternity.

3. I may speak to some who do not serve God at all. To them how awfully must the few hours of the departing year sound! Another year gone, and I as bad as ever! another year gone, and I not one step the nearer heaven! Oh turn, while yet you may; a just God has given you a holy law, which you have broken. For each offence you deserve to be eternally lost:—Why are you not lost already? Because God sustains you, and Christ pleads for you; because God, even He

whom you have grievously offended,—the powerful, the just, the merciful,—spares your guilty life. Nay, more : He offers you a Saviour, willing to receive you, wicked as you are ; willing to pardon all your sins, willing to give you a home in heaven.

SERMON XIII.

THE BITTER CUP.

The cup that My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it ?

JOHN xviii. 11.

WE pass on to the closing scenes of our Saviour's ministry ; we follow Him to the garden where He was betrayed, and where He uttered the words of the text.

His life of suffering was well-nigh over. "The Captain of our salvation had been made perfect through suffering." He had lived His life of sorrow, and was now about to suffer for our sins, "the just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God."

In His scenes of Passion He is more strikingly our example than ever : in resignation most perfect, in humility most lowly, in forgiveness most free. This hallowed garden had seen His last conversation with His disciples, and His own

Agony. He had had a strife. He was resigned into the hands of His Father ; His scattered disciples had lingered a moment to see their Master taken from them, lingered before they all forsook Him, and in that moment Peter, with his usual heat, had struck a blow in defence of his Lord. The wound he gave was healed by the Hand of Jesus,—loosed from the cord that bound Him, and that to heal His murderer. That was all. “The cup that His Father had given Him shall He not drink it?” These were His words of patience, and He gave Himself to go whither they would. His friends forsook Him, and He was led away.

a. The cup He had drunk had been bitter, the dregs He had to drink were bitterer still. It was our sin had made the draught so bitter ; God had “laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” There had been no need for sorrow had there been no sin. But man had sinned ; and sin came bringing with it all its train,—sorrow, death, despair. More than that, sin brought on all eternal punishment. Not one was free ;—the child that hung upon the breast ; the aged sufferer, whose trembling limbs had brought him to the grave ; the poor creature to whom sickness and disease had given a life of agony, had

only agony still worse beyond the grave ; the man whose good nature would give up any comfort for his fellow-being ; the quiet, steady, neighbour, the warm friend, the meek and gentle adviser ;—all must have gone to ruin, had no hope on earth, no hope in heaven : all lost,—heaven, happiness, peace ; lost, when man fell, and man could not recover it. Not alone was that world beyond death made hopeless and dark by sin ; not only there did no ray of better hope or brighter days dawn upon the poor sufferers of earth, but here too all was dark. Here, too, man began to be a sufferer ; sickness wasted the healthy body, the colour of health must give way to the flush of fever or the paleness of death. The infant dies, the child of affection drops into the tomb before it grow to manhood ; or if it grow up at all, disappointed, each year must make it feel earth less satisfactory. Poverty wastes the health and ruins the temper, and the dearest friends prove faithless and untrue. All this, and more, much more, sin brought with it. All this, without a hope, without an ark upon the waste of waters, without one Zoar amid the burning cities, without one refuge from the storm ; not one, until Jesus promised to come. His cross was the only pillar of hope to which

the sinking sinner could cling ; there was the only place to hold our anchor. It rose amid the desolation of earth, and pointed from earth to heaven ; spoke to us of better days, told us of a brighter land,—the cross of Jesus. But remember, it was a cross ; He must suffer on it, or there was no heaven for us. It was His sufferings must write upon it, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,” or it led us to no better hopes. All this sin must pay its price, all this debt must be paid, all this sorrow must fall somewhere. If it did not rest on us, God must be satisfied ; somebody must suffer ; and that sufferer was Jesus Christ. Then was not the cup He drank a bitter cup ?

Time was when earth had no sorrow ; when Eden was the home of Adam, and Adam had not fallen. Then Eden’s waters flowed without a wave to ruffle them, without a storm to trouble them ; when forests and harvests never faded at the return of autumn, or withered beneath a winter’s wind ; when the still twilight of the summer evenings knew no sound but the footsteps of God walking along her hallowed glens, and Adam in the majesty of innocence walked forth to meet Him. Then was no sorrow known ; then, by the fountain, the lion could

wander with the lamb, and a little child could lead them; then, in her pastures, the wolf and the kid could lie down together, and none could hurt or destroy in all that holy mountain. But Satan came into that garden; he looked upon it, and all withered with his look. He tempted, and Adam sinned. The Lord walked forth in the garden, but Adam met Him not. The lamb fled from the lion, and storms blew over the troubled fountains; winter withered the forests and the harvests; sorrow came on all, death came on all, and all for sin.

Sin must receive sorrow for its wages, and therefore the cup that Jesus had to drink was "a bitter cup."

3. But His Father gave it Him, and He drank it. It was His will that He should drink it, and shall He refuse? No! His cry had ever been, "Not My will, but Thine be done." He met the questions of others with "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" God had declared that that cup must be drunk, or He could not be satisfied, and man could not be saved. He had promised to bear it all, and He bore it without a murmur. Although from His manger-bed to His closing agony the path of obedience was a bitter one; although "the archers

sorely grieved Him, and shot at Him, and the hand of the Lord pressed Him sore," yet it was His Father's will, and shall He not do it? What a tale of suffering obedience! how does it shame us, who murmur beneath the least cloud of adversity, and lose our courage at the least ripple on the waters!

But we should mark the way in which He speaks of His resignation: "The cup which My Father hath given Me *shall I not* drink it?" He asks the question. "Is it possible I can do anything but what My Father gives Me to do? Can My will be different to His? Can a son have a feeling against the wish of his father? No: let the scene be dark before, and all around; let the cross be raised on Calvary, and the soldiers gathered in the judgment-hall, it is My Father's will, and shall I not do it?" What obedience! what a lesson, not only for our obedience to Him who was His God and our God, His Father and our Father, but also to our earthly parents! Would that children could take this perfect pattern, and say of their parents as Jesus did of God, "The will of My Father, shall I not do it?"

Or again, look at the moment in which He said it. What could be more dark? Surrounded

by the soldiers, without a friend, without a home, without a hope; nothing before Him but curses, cruelty, and shame, the crown of thorns, the purple robe, the cross,—all before His eyes, not a hope on this side the grave. All this made up His Father's will; these were the drops that made that bitter draught, and filled that bitter cup; and yet not a doubt whether He should do it or not; not one scruple: "It is My Father's will, and shall I not do it? Shall I not bear it? It may seem hard, but what He bids must end well."

What a lesson do we learn from this His example! Let us pray to God by His Spirit to help us to learn it, and to practise it.

In this respect our path is like the path of Christ, a path of *sorrow*. Often, the cup that our Father gives to us is very bitter, but the cup that your Father hath given you shall you not drink it?

I may say it is impossible to be religious without drinking many a bitter drop; religion consists partly in doing so. We may try to make it otherwise, but it will be like stopping a torrent; it will burst out somewhere, if it do not where we stand; it will be like shutting our eyes to the storm, and saying there is none because we do

not choose to see it. The way to heaven is not without a cloud, because we choose to make it so ; the fact is, our way is not the way to heaven if we have, no trouble, no bitterness ; the Christian must have sorrows of some kind, from his cradle to his grave ; the stream that flows along our path of life is a stream of bitter waters, and whenever along its passing tide we dip our cup to drink, we shall find those waters bitter. It is of no use to sweeten the bitter cup ; the medicine would lose its use if made pleasant. The Bible tells us that those who enter heaven enter it through much tribulation, and that those who are loved of the Lord are and must be chastened.

If the flowers are to be nourished by the shower, they must do without the sun for awhile, for the cloud must hide it. But it is well when we know that on the other side that cloud there is a sun.

What are the bitter drops which make our cup a bitter one to drink ? Then how should we drink it ? What are the bitter drops of your cup ? If you are trying to serve the Lord with a sincere heart, your most bitter drop will be *temptation*.

This is bitter, because it never leaves us, because it follows us on our journey from the be-

ginning to the end ; because it is the trial of all others which draws us away from the Rock of our refuge, from Christ. There are waves which toss us in our journey, waves which drive us closer to our Rock of refuge,—waves of trouble, that seem to carry us to His very arms ; but this wave seems ever the one that carries us away from Christ, when we would rest upon Him. There are winds which seem to carry us fast into the haven of peace, winds of earthly disappointment, which drive us home ; but this seems ever a contrary wind, which hurries us away from heaven the moment we come in sight of it. One thing we may feel sure of, Satan will never tire of tempting us till we tire of seeking God. If ever you hope to be free of temptation you will be disappointed ; it is one of your greatest crosses, and ever will be here. The moment we set our face to serve the Lord, Satan will assail us. He cares not to tempt those who are already his. See the life of Christ : as soon as He set out upon the work of God's ministry, then did Satan tempt Him ; the moment Israel set their faces towards the land of Canaan, then Pharaoh began to persecute them ; the moment you determine to serve the Lord better, then will *your tempter* strive to hinder you. He that carries

the flag in the battle is the man at whom most shots are fired : so the man who carries the Lord's banner, who is looked on by others as God's servant, Satan will most wish to destroy. If you receive the sacrament, you will find your temptations are greater ; if you kneel down to pray, a thousand sinful thoughts come that never came before ; if you declare yourself a servant of God, and appear so to others, then will you find your temper most tried, your faith most shaken, your passions most heated, your impatience greater ; and often, when you have expected peace, cloud after cloud of trouble will rise across your soul, till you are inclined to give all up, and cry, " My God, why hast Thou forsaken me ? "

You who are trying to serve God, I ask you, is not this the case with you ? If you gave a history of your feelings, would not this be its history ? Are you inclined to give it up, to complain that the Lord allows you to be tempted too far ? Then shall I not say, The cup that My Father hath given thee, shalt thou not drink it ? Was not temptation part of that very cup which His Father had given to Christ, and are you not rather honoured by having the same ? You may be inclined to say, " But temptation comes not of God, He cannot tempt any one to evil ; and

therefore, as temptation comes from the devil, it is not my Father's cup." It is true God cannot tempt any one, but God can guide your temptations, and overrule them for your good. It was not God that killed Job's children, his flocks, and his herds, and covered him with disease, sickness, and misery. Satan did it all, but God allowed it; God said, You shall go so far, and no farther; he shall not be tempted above what he is able to bear. God watched him while he was tried. It was not God that tempted His Son, but His Spirit led Him to be tempted, and having come off a conqueror, His angels came to comfort Him. So is it with you. Satan tries you because you are God's servant; because if he can make you fall, he has won indeed a victory; he has disappointed angels, he has given occasion of scoffing among men. Yes, the world is the place where you are tried, where you stand to fight with Satan; angels and men look on while you fight; God judges of the fight, who is conqueror, and He it is who will place a crown of glory on the head of His redeemed; on your head, when you have fought the good fight, and conquered the devil. This is your reward.

Thus does God allow temptation; in this way temptation is a drop in that bitter cup which

your Father hath given you, and shall you not drink it?

And what is another drop in your cup? *Trial.*

Perhaps your earthly affairs go wrong? Perhaps you started in life with better hopes than you ended it. Perhaps your children have disappointed you, your friends proved unfaithful to you, relations refused to help you when you were in distress. A few years ago, and you may have had around you many a face which smiled on you, many whom you loved, and who loved you; many who sat around you, and formed part of your family circle, whom you may have looked at as those who should be your comforts in coming years; and perhaps one by one they have dropped away; the churchyard holds some, others have disappointed you, all have been different to what you expected. Those who declared the greatest friendship have not shewn it by their actions, or continued to feel it no more. Are these drops in your cup of trial? your Saviour had them too; faithless friends, earthly poverty: He had the same as you, and He bore it because His Father gave it Him.

Perhaps among your trials you have as a cause of trouble that you are unsettled in your earthly matters: the home you wished to be your

own you have been obliged to leave ; sickness, ill-health, has broken up your brightest plans, and the life that seemed once cloudless has now darkened over with many a shadow. Is this the draught your God has given you ? It has been drunk to the very dregs by His best-beloved Son ; *you* deserve it, He never did.

Or are your troubles of a different nature ? does the sinfulness of your friends, your companions in life, wring many a heartfelt pang from you ? do their inconsistencies, their sins against God, their unthankfulness, weigh heavy on your mind ? do those who once promised better things disappoint you ? That perhaps is your especial trial ; it is the cup your Father hath given you, shall you not drink it ?

As I said before, the stream that runs along our course of life is full of bitter waters, and they must be so to the last. The only difference is that the day perhaps will come when they shall sparkle with the beams of the sun which is now clouded. Now the drops are dark and bitter too ; then they may not be dark, but they *must* be bitter. Still trials, still temptations, but lit with the love of Christ the stream flows on, and we shall mind its bitterness less the more *that light* is shed upon it. The waters are bitter

simply because they are on earth ; and we were never meant, if serving God, to have much happiness in earthly things ; our joys are to be above, and from above, and the less clouded that heavenly land, the better for us. Some men so much mistake the object of religion that they think it is to make earth bright, and to make us enjoy the pleasures of the world without the troubles sinners have. That is *not* religion ; God never meant it ; and while we dwell here, all that we have belonging to the world will be disappointing.

There is a land to which the stream I speak of leads us ; where the cup that we shall drink flows over with water drawn from the river of life ; a land where no cloud will ever darken our peace, no chilling wind distress the soul : a land where Satan never enters, temptation never comes, sorrow never annoys ; a land where we shall see Jesus face to face, and never doubt again. God grant we all may reach it, and rest in it for ever ! When once there, how different will look that stream of trial, which we drink of now ; when we see that every ripple, every drop which tastes so bitter now, fell from the very heaven to which they have brought us, and that it was but the cloud that dropped it that prevented our seeing

whence it came. Sweet will seem those drops of trial then, because we shall know they came from our Father's hand.

But they *are* bitter now ; they *are* often dark now. We have seen what in our case they are ; we have seen what our Saviour's were ; we have seen how He bore His ; let us tread in His footsteps. How striking is the lesson we learn from Him ! what patient resignation, what submission ! would that we could copy it ! We talk of resignation ; but how faint, how weak, is ours compared with His ! we merely *talk* of it.

What is too often *our* resignation ?

It is having troubles ; and while we say we are resigned, ever complaining of them, ever calling out the pity of others, ever telling them to others, so making up for our trials by gaining the pity of man. That is not resignation. Resignation is bearing the trial God sends us, and taking it as a trial, not trying to make it none.

Christ did not so ; He called for no pity, He asked for no help, He even forbad the sorrow of His friends. " Daughters of Jerusalem, weep *not* for Me." He suffered, and suffered innocently, yet never opened His mouth to call for pity, or to defend Himself. He bore His cross, and though fainting beneath its load, He asked none

to bear it, till the soldiers took it from Him. He patiently bore the crown of thorns, the insulting soldiers, the cross: it was the cup that His Father had given Him, and shall He not drink it? shall He try to make that sweet which God had given Him as bitter? Is this the way you bear trial?

Again, do you bear trial cheerfully? do you not often make trial an excuse for duty, and because you have many troubles relax obedience? Trials are no excuse for sin, and making them such is the act of a rebellious child,—not of a submissive one. But men often mistake this. They have trials and afflictions, and seem to think they will take them to heaven; that they are to save them the trouble of obedience, and because they are unhappy here, that they will be happy there. This is not drinking the cup that our Father hath given us; it is taking the cup of sorrow, and forgetting the Hand that gives it, or why it was given. God's own beloved Son drank it not so: when its draught was most bitter, even so as to draw from His brow the drops of blood; even then His obedience was perfect—"Not My will, but Thine be done."

Resignation is bearing affliction as if it came

from God ; not ever talking of it, and making it of no use. It is feeling that it comes from our Father, and that He knows better than we ; it is drinking the draught He gives us to the very dregs, and not trying to sweeten it ; it is carrying our sorrows to Him to be enabled to bear them, not running into the world for pleasure, to forget our trials ; it is feeling thankful to be allowed to suffer for the cause of Christ, trusting to Him that He will do the best, not thinking that other sorrows would be better than the ones we have. Rely on it, all have some trial, and God gives us that which most suits our case ; He gives us that that will most easily carry us to heaven if we use it rightly.

Would to God we could all feel this submission ! You all have your share of trial : are you making it as so many steps in the ladder which takes you to the arms of Christ, or is it rather driving you from Him ? is He your example in all ? are you striving to be perfect as He was perfect, to tread in His footsteps, to bear your trials with calmness, meek and gentle under them all ? It is a comfort to know that Jesus has borne so much before us, that He knows all we feel, and that His hand is guiding each affliction, so that it may not hurt us. Oh, it is sweet

to know that all is working for our good ; to know that the work is going on, however painful to us, and that our Father does it all.

Sinner ! are you inclined to say, " My troubles do not bring me to God ? " That is your own fault ; they might, if you would let them. God sent them for your good ; they may prove useless, but God does not mean that they should.

If, then, we do but feel that they are drawing us near to God, let us not repine ; if the world wonder at our bearing trouble, let us shew them how we value it, by a more patient submission than theirs. If, like Peter, men would take us away from the trials God sends us, let us meet them with the Saviour's answer, — " It is the cup given me by God, and shall I wish not to drink it ? "

Take up thy cross, therefore, believer, and follow Jesus in the path that leads to everlasting peace. He has gone before, bearing that cross on which He died for thee, that you might follow in patiently bearing your cross, and on it die to yourself for Him.

And remember, you cannot escape your cross. It is always ready, and waits for you in every place : go where you will, you will always find it. If you bear it willingly, it will soon bear you be-

yond the reach of suffering,—“where God shall take away all sorrow from your heart.” Why hope to escape it? not one hour did our Lord live without tasting the bitter cup. Do you desire peace and repose, when He had none? You cannot bear that cross by yourself; you are deceived, much deceived, if you think you can; the grace of Christ must help you. No, it is not in man of himself to bear the cross, to resist the flesh, to shun honours, to take affronts with meekness, to despise self, to bear with calm resignation the loss of fortune, health, and friends, and to have no desire for riches, honour, or pleasure. With man it is impossible; with God all things are possible.

Drink, then, freely and patiently of the Lord's cup. The sun shines brighter when the cloud has passed away, the calm is fairer after the storm, peace is sweeter after sorrow, rest after labour; and the joy of heaven will be the purer for the sorrows of earth. Happy are you if they lead you there.

SERMON XIV.

THE LESSON OF SORROW.

And being in an agony, He prayed the more earnestly.

LUKE ~~xxii.~~ 44.

22

EACH season has its own duties,—sorrow some, and prosperity others. We must take a deep view of things, and find out the duties of our condition, its causes and objects. Each one of us has much sorrow,—“the heart knoweth its own bitterness;” and none know our own trial so well as we do ourselves. Perhaps men think we have no trial, while we are well-nigh sinking under one, all the keener because unknown. Or perhaps men think we have a great trial, while what they think our trial we find easy enough to bear, compared with some other they think nothing of.

But we all have some; it is our earthly heritage: the heritage of sin is sorrow. If we are God's people, our sorrow is the cross we bear

with Christ, our sweet privilege; if we are not God's people, our sorrow is the chastisement of sin.

Let us gather the lessons sorrow would teach us from the story of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, since we all have trials, and would make Him in all things our pattern, who is our Saviour too.

Each part of the narrative has its own direct lesson: it is a complete picture of the Christian in sorrow.

1. Let us take it in order.

Our Lord had now gone forth from the city,—where, according to the law, He had eaten the Passover,—and passed over the brook Cedron, that stream over which King David had before passed with his companions in sorrow, when he fled from Absalom. He came to the place where He used to pray:—"Then cometh Jesus to a place which is called Gethsemane, where there was a garden."

We know He often spent the night in the open air with His disciples, but to-night we know not for certain why it was, for we are told the night "*was cold*." It may have been usual with them, on account of their great poverty; for we know that the Son of Man "had not where

to lay His head ;” and perhaps the house at Bethany was not sufficient to afford Him its friendly shelter, for the concourse at Jerusalem was great.

The agony and grave of Christ were in *a garden*. There was a reason here. In a garden Satan overcame man, and in a garden he was overcome of man,—“the man Christ Jesus ;” as in a garden Adam sinned, so in a garden was the tomb and agony of Christ ; in a garden the first Adam eat the pleasant fruit, in a garden the second Adam drank the bitter cup ; the garden where Adam was, brought forth to him all abundance with the sweat of his brow, but the garden in which the Son of Man was cast was not only watered by the sweat of His brow, which was the curse of Adam, but with His sweat of blood ; in a garden the sentence of death was passed on man,—“the voice of the Lord was heard walking in the garden in the cool of the day,”—and in the cool of the night the second Adam laid Himself down in stillness and silence to bear Adam’s doom. As Adam left the garden the sentence was pronounced,—the earth should bring forth thorns ; and in death His Body entered the garden of the tomb, and He was divested of the crown of

thorns which He had worn. Thus was Adam's punishment borne and worn by the Son of Man. Jesus, the King of sorrows, how didst Thou in all things bear the sinner's doom !

Such was the garden. So we were cast out of the garden of Eden and its joy by Adam's sin ; but Jesus opens the gates of a fairer garden still, whose flowers never fade ; though He walks first, and suffers in it, before He rises in it, and bids us follow. It is good for us to be here, in the garden of sorrows with Christ. Such is our first part of sorrow with Christ ; — “and His disciples also followed Him :” they could not rest away from Him, so they followed ; so do we.

2. “And when He was at the place, He said, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And He saith unto His disciples, Sit ye here while I go and pray yonder.” That was at the entrance of the garden. The eight stayed there while He went in :—“And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith He unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death : tarry ye here, and watch with Me.”

He goes to pray for them, but they must pray for themselves too ; He now intercedes in heaven

for us, but He is ever leading us to pray with Him. And there is a human tenderness and affection shewn forth here, which, in times of great distress, is ever a great comfort. He would not go far from them, as wishing to be with them, leaning upon them, as it were, for support and sympathy, and choosing them from the others as able to watch with Him: so He draws us near Him in His agony. Those who were less strong He left apart at the garden gate, saving them the severe trial of witnessing His Agony: we who best know Christ, approach Him in affliction and sorrow,—sorrowing with Him. He chose the three who knew Him best; they had been with Him on other eminent occasions alone. In their several places the disciples abode with Christ; so let us abide with Jesus in our own calling, and watch with Him, the Keeper of Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps. It was well suited for St. Peter, who had just been filled with self-confidence, to see Him falling on His face, and hear Him saying, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me:” so the most earnest Christians should watch and pray much, lest their graces should create conceit.

And having gone a little further,—“He

was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast." But the word is much stronger,—“He was torn away from them,” probably by some strong inward agony; as it is said before,—“The spirit *driveth* Him into the wilderness.”

3. We have supposed ourselves bearing sorrow for His sake. *How* like Him shall we bear it?

“*He withdrew Himself.*” When in trouble, we should not seek to be seen and pitied: sorrow is sent us of God, and our object is to bear it, not to get rid of it; to let it work its own end in us, not to work it out of us: because there is an object, a reason for our suffering, a reason why God sends it, as was the case with Jesus Christ. The object of His sorrow was man's salvation, and man could not be saved without it; the object of our sorrow is fitness for heaven, and we could not be fit for heaven without it. We should, then, let it work its way, and withdraw ourselves that it may work the more easily; and we should withdraw ourselves into retirement.

Because in the world's turmoils and cares we are likely to forget our sorrow, instead of remembering it, and seeing *why* it is sent. Sorrow is a still, silent temple, in which we sit alone by night to meet and talk with God; a

dark temple, in which we stand gazing upward, till in its depth the glory gradually bursts, proclaiming that God is there, and that we must meet Him alone; and our very sighs and tears, when well chastened, become like incense. Sorrow is as a garden by night, — Gethsemane, where the evening shadows fall, and hide its flowers, though they are there; and we are with *Him alone*. So we should withdraw ourselves, to be *alone*.

Then, in the world our sorrow gains too much pity and admiration from men; or we are in danger of making up for sorrow by having men's compassion, and being thought martyrs; and sorrow becomes melancholy pleasure, not real trial. We should not wish to lose, or even sweeten, one bitter drop of that cup which we know we ought to drink, to get to heaven. So we withdraw ourselves lest our sorrow lose its keenness.

Then, in the world we get into the world's way of thinking and judging of things, and we begin to look at trial as accidental, or as in the common course of things, and not as sent immediately by God to us; so losing the comfort of feeling that we are "chastened of God and afflicted." So we withdraw ourselves.

Then, in retirement we are able to see and feel God's answer to prayer : God's angel comes down ; we are looking for him. Not so in the world ; there we pray and forget to await the answer, or are in scenes where we do not hear or understand the answer when it comes ; and so it comes, and is as a voice passing by, and we hear it not ; or we hear God's voice and know not it is so, but think, as it were, Eli speaks. So we withdraw ourselves, and are ever ready to receive God's answer.

Resolve to bear your trouble like a child, not dwelling on each part of it with apprehension, but go straight forward, and think of nothing but how to make your trouble useful.

Do not attempt to choose the kind of your sorrow ; let it be what God please, so it be no greater than your spirit can bear.

Do not let the smart of your sorrow make you cry out for death. You are not patient, unless you are content to live. God has made suffering our work, and we may not impatiently long for evening, lest at night we find the reward of him who was weary of his work.

Withdraw yourself to practise these rules.

He took the three. In deep sorrow we may draw near us our dearest, most tried friends, from

the example of Jesus Christ ; those who know us best, as they knew Him ; those who are best prepared for sorrow, and likely to view it calmly.

Men are fond of contrary ways in trouble.

1. They will choose in sorrow men who will indulge in great grief, that they may have the pleasure of being the cause of violent grief.

2. They choose men who will flatter them, and dwell on their virtues, and think little that they deserve to bear such sorrow.

3. Or men who cannot advise them, or teach them the true lessons of grief, and the true source of strength and comfort. Men do not like friends who will tell them of the need there was for their trial, of the faults they had that need correction, and that therefore they were chastened ; taking a hard, real view of grief. This men do not like ; so they choose weak friends, who do them more harm than good. Let us choose the three, and leave the eight ; choose friends in sorrow as Jesus did—for sympathy and comfort, to throw ourselves on them, as He did ; but choosing the most tried and wise.

He left the eight. They were not prepared for such a scene ; it would have tried them too much ; so He, whose sorrow was deep, thought

of their sorrow, and would not have it made deeper, though it were for His sake.

He said to them, "Pray that ye enter not into temptation."

We should charge those who weep for us that they pray for themselves. When friends stand weeping round us as we die, let us bid them pray, lest they be eaten up of over-much sorrow ; let us direct them to Jesus to comfort them, and charge them rather to make our *grief* their *gain*, than to take pleasure in seeing them unhappy for our sakes.

Such are the lessons we learn for our sorrowful moments, from the first part of the sufferings of Jesus in the garden. "And He fell on His face upon the earth, and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass from Him. And He said, My Father, if it be possible,—all things are possible unto Thee,—take away this cup from Me, let this cup pass : but not as I will, but as Thou." "*My Father*," speaking as God's only-begotten Son, the *first-born*.

Now here we learn to *pray* in sorrow. Prayer is the work of sorrow ; sorrow is given us to make us pray. Yet do we pray in sorrow ? If every trial we had, called forth a more earnest prayer, how holy we should become ! how

truly should we feel that “no chastening for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous; nevertheless *afterward* it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness, unto them which are exercised thereby.” Prayer would so raise us above the cause of our grief, that we should feel its edge far less keenly, and we should still have gained what God intended by it—freedom from the world’s snares.

The subject of our prayer should be as His:—

“*My Father.*” Since God is our Father, to Him we go, as a child would for relief from the trouble which the father has inflicted; thus His name conveys the truth that He does love us, and that all He is doing is gentle and full of mercy, though it seem severe. For what could a father do otherwise? Yet we should speak as children,—obedient, submissive, affectionate, not resisting,—sheltering in the name of father.

“*If it be possible.*” If it be possible that man may be saved, and yet I not drink the bitter cup, let it be. We would say, If it be possible that I may reach heaven, and yet not drink so deep of trial, let it be. The word *possible* not referring to the power of God to free us from trial, for of course He could, but to the power of our reaching heaven without going through so much.

So we may wish to have our trial removed if it be not needful, and we may use lawful means to get it removed, so that we are willing to bear it if God wish us to continue it,—

“Wishing, not struggling to be free.”

“*Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.*” I do not know what is best; I leave it all to Thee, I lie quiet in Thy hands; and though I pray to be relieved, yet I am willing to bear all; only let me reach heaven, and I care not what I bear. It was a thought that crossed me, that I would be free of sorrow, but it was but a thought, and if opposed to what Thy will is, I give it all up; only work Thy will, and pardon, gracious God, this poor, erring, wilful heart, for having one wish that was not Thine. Hurt me in my dearest point, take from me all that I love, and in this cold, silent sepulchre I will sit and bear Thy will, and repress the choking sob, since Thou hast willed it. Disappoint me in life's brightest hopes, and take away my fame and good report; I will retire from the busy world which scorns me, and in some solitude seek Thee, as in a temple where only Thou and I dwell, and Thou shalt be more than all the world to me. Take from me health, and on my pillow I may

yet find Thee, and calmly think upon the thorny pillow Thy brow rested on—think it was all for me, and that will make it my will to bear it.

Or bow me down with grief, pain, and doubts, still I will think how He bore His agony of doubt. “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” And I will bend beneath my cross as He did, and bear it after Him.

Or take my life away, and I will die, and leave the ties I love, the world I have made too much my home; in death I will think of how Thou didst die; and as I touch the dark, cold river, ere I cross it Thy cry shall be upon my lips, and I will look to yonder side, where Thou art waiting, standing to receive me; and while I look on Thee I will wish to die, since to be with Thee is “far better.”

So would I have Thy will mine, and so I will, with Thy help, make each thing Thou desirest what I should wish; only bring me to heaven, to dwell with Thee for ever, for Thou knowest best how; “not as I will, but as Thou wilt.”

SERMON XV.

THE INWARD STRUGGLE.

Not My will, but Thine be done.—LUKE xxiii. 42. 1

THE supper was over—the last they should ever eat together,—and Jesus and His disciples went out. Judas had left the room: the eye of his Master had followed the traitor at every turn; He knew he would soon be at the garden, and He must be there to meet him. It wanted but half-an-hour of midnight, the time the Pass-over was always eaten. Jesus and His eleven disciples went out together. It wanted two nights of the full moon. They moved along the silent streets, for all men were asleep; — they little thought what that night should happen. They approached the garden of Gethsemane. There were many gardens about Jerusalem, and this was one of the most beautiful. It was sheltered by the Mount of Olives, and was near the village of

Bethany. The torrent of Cedron flowed full and fast between the city and the garden, and it was the time of a rainy season. The moon, near its full, shone upon it, as Jesus and His few followers crossed its murmuring waves, the only sound, perhaps, which broke the silence of the city, except the footsteps, in the far distance, of Judas and his band of soldiers getting ready. The disciples were very sorrowful as they listened to the voice of their Master for the last time. Eight He left at the garden-gate, and three He took with Him. How affecting must have been the scene—the Son of God and His desolate disciples treading along the grassy paths of the garden where they had so often been before, treading them now for the last time. At the full of the moon which shone above them He would have died, killed by a cruel death, and they without a friend. Our Lord knew that Judas would soon be there, and therefore He came; He gave Himself up a willing sufferer for our sakes; His eye could watch each turn that Judas made towards the garden; each street he moved along He could see, and there was not much time. The three disciples lay down to watch; their Master left them a little space. And now came the Agony, the last, long, bitter

Agony, the inward conflict. How intense was that agony we cannot tell. It was far beyond mere human agony : " If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me ; nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done." How deep must have been the conflict, that last struggle ! We do not know the causes of it. The cup He wished might pass away was probably not His death, not the cross. It did pass away. It lasted one hour ; one hour, through which the disciples could not watch with Him. And then it was over. It was bitter, for the sweat that fell in heavy drops from His brow was of blood. " And He came out, and went, as He was wont, to the mount of Olives ; and His disciples also followed Him. And when He was at the place, He said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me : nevertheless, not My will, but Thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly : and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when He rose up from prayer, and was come to His disciples, He found

them sleeping for sorrow, and said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

How beautiful that midnight scene, when the quiet of Gethsemane was broken by the angel comforting our Lord! Worn out with sorrow, the hour late, the disciples could not watch even that one hour; and behold, the time was come: the soldiers, who had been drawing nearer and nearer to the garden, were now there. Judas knew the garden that his Master loved; he led the soldiers in, and Jesus of Nazareth was betrayed into the hands of sinful men. They struck one blow in His defence, and then all His disciples forsook Him. His Father's will, not His, be done.

We, too, have an inward conflict, a constant battle, at least if we be God's servants. Let us learn from this portion of our Saviour's sorrows to breathe the same spirit:—"Not my will, but Thine be done."

One sign of a converted heart is the constant, the unceasing agony which there may be, the struggle between the flesh and the spirit. Agony means strife, contest; and therefore surely the story of Christ's agony is one of great comfort to you, who have also an unceasing strife.

I said one sign of a converted heart may be this inward strife. It is an awful thing, and yet a comforting one. Awful, yes, very awful to many; awful because with so many there is no inward struggle whatever; if sin lurks; if your conscience lets you go on in peace; awful if you are at peace, a false peace, a peace whispered in your ears by devils; if your days go by with a quiet, easy mind, and there is no struggle, no strife, no discomfort. I say it is awful, because it is sure to have a dreadful end. There must be inward struggles, there must be secret agonies, if you *are* God's servants; if there is none, you may not be God's faithful soldier; there must be the battle between the flesh and the spirit. Do not trust the calm; the waters of Bethesda could not heal until they were troubled; the calm did no good. It *is* awful if you end miserably; it *is* awful if your quiet mind lead you to the torturing troubles of the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.

It is comforting; comforting to those of you who have that inward strife, that hidden agony, because it is a sign that you belong to God, or there would be none; comforting, because you may feel sure that that trouble will end in peace, that storm in a calm. The trouble that God's

Spirit makes in the heart is like the stirring of Bethesda's waters ; it heals, it leads to health, even the soul's salvation. Be not satisfied without this inward strife, if you have temptation ; too many are, and will not find their error till past all hope. However severe the agony may be, let our language cheerfully be : "Not my will, but Thine be done."

With regard to this inward strife, let us first see what are the kinds of inward struggles which are not the contest between the flesh and the spirit. It is true, to be God's child, to have a hope of heaven, we must have a strife going on within ; but this strife needs looking into. There are some kinds of inward conflict not caused by God's Spirit ; we may be deceiving ourselves. Let us see what these false conflicts may be.

1. There is many a man, who is no servant of God, who yet has a certain hatred for sin ; a certain wish to destroy it. For instance, the very feelings of our nature make us hate some sins. We hate cruelty, we hate ingratitude to parents ; there are high and haughty spirits that will hate covetousness, and dishonesty, and deceitfulness ; but yet it may not be God's Spirit that makes them hate them. The question is,

Do you hate all sin equally? If the strife within you be made by God's Spirit you will try to fight with every sin, however small; all will be hateful to you that God hates. Do not therefore trust to any hatred you may have for those disgusting sins which even men of the world will detest; for these you may hate, and yet be no servant of God.

2. Or again; a man may have a horror of those sins which are outwardly seen by others, and he may try to destroy them. Like the Pharisees of old, he may cleanse the outside of the cup, but leave the inside untouched. A man may, again, hate a sin which is against his own natural inclination; as, for example, a covetous man will hate waste and prodigality, and yet be no servant of God, and has no reason to think the strife against sin is the strife with the spirit and the flesh. Are you trusting to some such hatred to sin? Trust it not; it is no right hatred of sin, it is no sign you are God's child, it is no proof that God's Spirit works with you. Perhaps the things you would not, those you do, in this way, but it is from some wrong reason you would not do them.

3. We may lay down these rules. A man merely hating sin from nature will seldom or

never hate or strive with *unbelief*, or his *original corruption*. It will ever be with outward and disgusting sins that he will strive ; and, again, he will fight against his corruptions from fear of the punishment they bring, rather than because they are against the holiness of God. Like Cain, he will rather cry out, " My punishment is greater than I can bear ;" while the servant of God will rather say with Joseph, " Shall I do this great wickedness and sin against God ?"

No, the fear of punishment alone is not enough to shew that your sorrow for sin is right, or a sign that you belong to God. There are certain causes for which we hate sin, and if we have never hated it on these accounts, we may doubt if ever we hated it rightly at all. 1. The holiness of God ; 2. The fear of breaking off our intercourse with Him ; 3. The love of Christ.

I may mention a third way by which we may know the strife of a natural man from that of the spiritual nature. Those who are not God's servants will be satisfied with just restraining or keeping in their gross sins ; they will not go on to mortify their sin, to seek it out of the lurking corners of their heart, and, having found it, turn it out, and never let it rest till it

is clear and clean gone, root and branch. Is this the way you hunt out and mortify your sins? or are you satisfied with just keeping in the act of outward sin, and let the rest of it go on smouldering, like a burning ember, in your heart, until at last it break out into a flame of lust and the smoke of vanity?

How little now-a-days there is of this turning out of sin! Our lusts and passions rather leave us than we them; they rather die out of old age than we turn them out.

4. A fourth difference will be between the inward strife of the natural man and the hidden agony of the Christian; the first will only sometimes strive with his sins, do it by fits and starts; it will not be a constant, unceasing strife with sin, a daily and hourly mortifying it; and he will go to work in his own strength, not leaning on the arm of Jehovah, that "everlasting strength." It is this that makes so many Christians fall; they enter the battle in their own strength; they do not count the cost; they sit not down first to reckon the strength of their enemy, and to gain strength themselves sufficient for the battle.

In these ways it is that even a slave of the devil's may have something like a strife with

sin ; but this is no right conflict ; this is not the spirit warring with the flesh ; this is not the feeling that makes us cry out, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Is your inward agony no more than this ? Then you must not take comfort in it ; you may be yet in "the gall of bitterness ;" you may be "yet in your sins ;" heaven may not be your home ; God may not be your Father ; Christ not your Saviour ; hope not your privilege ; peace not your heritage. But unless you alter, the blackness of darkness for ever ; the lake that burns with fire and brimstone ; the second death.

No. Our spiritual warfare must be more like the Agony of our Lord. We are too well inclined to have fellowship with Christ in His glory rather than His sufferings. But we must be like Him in both ; we must suffer in His death ere we triumph in His resurrection. His was the inward agony, His the sweat of blood, His the bitterness of a broken spirit ; so too must be ours. He bent in Gethsemane beneath the contest that our sin brought on ; there, as He knelt before His Father, all the weight of human sin was poured upon His suffering soul ; in that mighty conflict His holy Spirit struggled and

agonized with the load of our sins : and shall we wish to be free of the conflict? shall we murmur because we, too, must fight? can we hear His patient cry, "Not My will, but Thine be done," and ourselves sigh and groan at every will of our own vile nature which we are called on to give up? No; with Him it was His own human will, His own feelings as man, struggling and bending beneath the will of His Father; and we must expect the same. We are too much for dividing Christ, after Solomon's judgment; she that was not the mother would have the child divided. So those who are for having Christ's glory without Christ's sufferings are no servants of His at all.

What then is the hidden strife, which, if we are God's children, we must expect? It is the constant battle with our own will, our own inclinations. It is a hard matter, I do not deny it; that struggle is the constant, unceasing strife with self. Day after day, year after year, the same self to conquer. It is hard, but it must be done: to pass hours in struggling with a hated sin, to spend sleepless nights of sorrow over it, to subdue it a little and then find it return again, the battle to be fought once more, another struggle, another strife, and no final victory after

all ; this is hard, but it must be done. To conquer, and to find more to conquer still ; to mount one height, and to find another and another still beyond it ; to come to a dying hour, and sin still ; Satan still, the flesh still, to fight with and destroy ; to have no peace, no rest, till the last breath has gone ; this is hard, but it *must* be done. To be ever having our brightest moments darkened, our purest desires stained, our happiest days turned into mourning for sin : it is all hard—all hard—very hard ; but who ever said it was otherwise ? When we think ourselves best to find ourselves worst ; to wish to do well, and to find evil ever present with us ; above all, in that cold dark river which bounds our world from heaven, whose waters must be chilling, let our faith be what it may, even there to find Satan busy, an inward agony even there. This is hard, but it *must* be done : —“ Not My will, but Thine be done.”

Are you feeling all this ? is this the history of your religion ? If it be not, the warfare with your flesh is not going on as it should be. I know I speak a solemn truth in saying this, for many *here* may be feeling no such thing ; many here may say, I know nothing of all this ; I never have such struggles ; my sorrow for sin is not

like this ; I see no need of it all ; my conscience is far more easy, and yet I have good hopes of mercy. You have *no* good hopes of mercy ; there may be in your case a need for all this inward strife, or you may not be the servant of God. Where is the use of hiding the truth ? You must know it ere long ; you must know it when all too late to turn ; then why not know it and believe it *now* ? now, when yet there is hope, yet there is mercy, yet you have time to turn ?

This inward conflict is simply expressed by those words of our blessed Redeemer, "Not My will, but God's will." It is the answer of each Christian to his own sinful heart, Not my will, but God's be done.

It is the pain we suffer when Satan suggests one sinful thought, and we feel and know it is against God's will. It is the sigh, the struggle, the battle with that desire. That is the inward conflict ; it is the keeping under our own desires, which are not exactly what the Bible would approve. That is the inward conflict. It is keeping under anger, when we feel inclined to give way to it ; it is restraining impatience, when we feel inclined to murmur ; it is indulging no sinful thought, however transient.

All this is part of the inward struggle. Do we make it? It is doing this not once or twice, not now and then, when struck by something that alarms the conscience; but doing it year after year, day after day, hour after hour. It is keeping it up without being discouraged, but going on persevering in the Lord. The sinner has no such struggle, because he follows what he feels, and does without restraint whatever he feels inclined for; there is no struggle, no opposition, no reluctance, except it be from the causes spoken of above. In the servant of God the struggle is incessant. Do you feel nothing of it? is it all peace with you? Then it is because you follow your own will, not God's will. There must be a struggle when we follow Him. Two streams of water cannot meet, and though running on, still flow smooth together. The will of man will resist the will and spirit of God; the flesh is enmity against the spirit. When every desire of the heart is to be opposed, when every inclination is to be thwarted, how can there be otherwise than a strife? We all know how we love the lusts of our own hearts; we know how, to please self, a man will give up many an earthly comfort, and forfeit his fair name among men. When all those incli-

nations are to be thwarted, how can there be any thing but a strife? Our inclinations are naturally bad; the very best of them are turned into wrong directions. Here and there a few good feelings, which rise like a lonely pillar amid a heap of ruins, but even these are defaced, polluted, spoilt; even that solitary column is crumbling to pieces; the natural love of a parent to a child is turned into idolatry, and our feelings of pity into the love of praise. Then how can there be otherwise than a strife if we are trying to do right? It needs not much time to see how our hearts are by nature against God. From the first hours of helpless infancy the inclinations are against holiness,—a child's first feeling is passion; passion works on to anger, strife, jealousy, and deceit in the boy; lust and vanity take their places in the youth, and worldliness, scepticism, avarice or ambition, in the man of mature years. Compare all this with the Word of God; see what His will requires, see what His law consists in; then tell me, must there *not* be a strife, if His will, not ours, must be done? The fact is, we are too well satisfied with our own condition; too well inclined to say, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace;" to think we do enough of what is right,

when every single feeling is enmity with God. We are lulled to a calm repose by him who is striving to gain us as his companions in hell. Trust not, I beseech you, that false and fatal security ; burst the fetters of this prison, and ask yourself what your condition truly is ; ask yourself, although there be no conflict, *ought* there not to be one ? see the way in which you indulge your temper, and see how God charges you to restrain it, and then say, ought there not to be a conflict ? See the way in which you indulge avarice, ambition, covetousness ; see how God has forbidden it, then say, ought there not to be a conflict ? See the way in which you murmur and are discontented with your lot ; see how God expects your resignation, then ought there not to be a conflict ? see the degree in which you are given to the world, neglect the Bible, mispend the Sunday ; see what God expects of you here ; then tell me, ought there not to be a conflict ?

I speak this to those who have no inward strife, and are satisfied with their peace ; who, though perhaps ignorantly, and that is the more alarming still, are doing their own will, not God's will.

If you never knew what it was to live crucify-

ing every lust,—if you do it not, the day shall come when Christ shall crucify you upon that cross of eternal agony when hope is past. If you will not leave sin, sin shall be your companion for ever. The strong man armed keeps the house, and so all is at peace, but it shall not be so long; this shall be said to you: “Be it unto you even as you will;” “they are joined to idols, let them alone.” Cursed is that peace that ends in war with God.

But a word to those who do feel this strife going on, who do cry out, “That which I do I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.” You who find a law in your members warring against the law of your minds, do you find it toilsome work? are you tired with the battle? do you long to lie down and rest,—rest, even in the quiet of the grave,—rest far from the sound of strife, far from the attack of sin? Be not too ready to have it over; your work is not yet done. Remember, your Redeemer has endured the same agony before you, and breathed that prayer that should ever be on your lips, “Not My will, but Thine be done.” His strife was not as yours is, with a sinful heart; but it was *for sin*, and the weight of sin He bore; it was

■ the same suffering you endure, though not from
■ the same cause.

■ Fight on, fear not; the more hard the battle
p the more sure the victory; the more terrible the
■ contest the more sure the help; many are the
■ uses that conflict is of to you.

1. You will by degrees conquer your lusts, and destroy your love for those idols to which, too much, you have given your heart; "Though thou art but a youth, and thine enemy a man of war," as Saul said to David, yet "through God you shall do valiantly."

2. Your conflict is the means of gaining much divine peace and comfort. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna;" for you must "sow in tears" to "reap in joy." Sweet is the peace the Christian gains through battling with his sins.

3. Your conflict shall increase your faith; your hope of heaven is brought oftener to your mind, your intercourse with God more frequent.

4. Your conflict shall give you experience in the ways and dealings of God.

Perhaps you find, after a long and wearisome conflict, your sins do not seem to give way, that you are more inclined to sin than ever, that you are no nearer heaven than when you began. How know you but what it may be your own

fault? There are many reasons why Christians get so little success over their sins and lusts. Have you looked to see the cause? Perhaps, 1. you are too much taken up in the concerns and affairs of this vain world, and therefore you do not succeed in conquering sin more. Remember St. Paul says, "No man that warreth doth entangle himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." Give up more of the world, and you shall have more victory. 2. Perhaps you are self-conceited, and this stops your success. Great ideas of self will not help us in the battle. Better say, "Lord, help me," than "Though all shall be offended, yet will not I." 3. You watch too little. We must be watching at the camp, or the enemy will take us by surprise. 4. You pray perhaps in secret too little. We need much sharpening of our weapons for this warfare. If we spent more time in conversing with God, we should oftener wear the palm of victory. 5. Have you faith enough? Too little faith often brings too little victory. Lastly, are you too soon satisfied? is one victory over a sin considered by you enough? does one battle tire you, one victory satisfy you? This will not do; your battles must go on till your sun goes down. The battle is not over till sunset, then all is peace.

But perhaps God has some reason for preventing your more frequent victory. God often wounds us in the leg, that we may not go far from His throne. He sees we can better thrive while here below with war than with victory. Fighting is better than conquering on earth. He leaves us many scorpions and serpents to fight with in the wilderness, that we may look the more to the serpent of brass, the Rock of our strength, the Redeemer, even Christ the Lord.

Believer in Jesus, this is your inward strife, this is your agony, in which you are like your suffering Redeemer. Thank God that you are allowed to suffer with Him; thank God that Christ has passed that strife before you; that He can tell and know your sufferings; that if you are His in the garden agony, His you shall be on the cross, His at the broken sepulchre, His on the Mount of Ascension, His when the throne is set for judgment, His in suffering, His in glory; share in His earthly agony, share in His heavenly triumph, His in life, in death, in all things. Pour forth, then, without a doubting thought, into His ear of pity, "By Thine agony and bloody sweat, by Thy cross and passion, Good Lord deliver me."

SERMON XVI.

THE GARDEN.

Come, let us go hence.—JOHN xiv. 31.

ONCE more we come near that holy week when Jesus died; once more we sinners come with fear and joy, to gaze on Him who died, to weep with Mary, to repent as Peter, God grant to be pardoned as the dying thief.

Another year has passed away, another Good Friday is coming, and we are yet alive; His arm has not in that time become shortened, nor His blood less saving. It is as it was 1800 years ago; the cross still stands in picture on Good Friday, the scenes are still fresh before us, the thief who died, the still hour, the dark sun, the prayer for pardon, the words of mercy, all fresh as if they happened yesterday. And thousands on thousands of shadowy groups are kneeling there, the forms of saints and martyrs of years gone by, the penitents of each passing year since

Jesus died ; they kneel, as it were, still for 'us ; all making one vast multitude,—the Church of Jesus ; and we join ourselves to the holy number, mingle in their prayers, partake of their spirit, and fill our destined place in Jesus' Church. The good are there, holy men of old. Some of our own are there, our own deeply, dearly loved, who have passed from our earthly home to heaven, or have sojourned with us a little on life's pilgrimage, and then have gone away ; and some of our own kneel there with us. And there are some sheep not of this fold, these also may God bring in ere long. And some of our parents are there, around whose death-bed pillow we knelt, and prayed, and wept. Such is the picture faith raises of the cross at this holy time, and far above the kneeling crowd is He the hope of all, uplifted on the cross, His sorrowful brow upturned to God, and by His side the thief, who, being penitent, was pardoned, that we might see pardon and the means of gaining it hanging side by side.

Let us examine the events from the Last Supper to the Judgment, some of which we have briefly referred to. May God be with us while we approach the holy ground and join with men of holy days to look on Him who was pierced.

I. *α*. In this enquiry we must take St. Luke's account, as the order of events which is most accurately given, since he throughout, in our Lord's life, attends to the order of events more than St. Matthew, and St. John's object was rather to fill up the gospel by those discourses of Christ which most bore on His divinity.

β. I would next shortly refer to the course of events from the Saturday before Palm Sunday to Thursday evening in Passion week.

On Saturday evening He arrived at Bethany from His journey, during which He passed through Bethany and healed Bartimæus. It must have been quite late in the evening, as we find He had far to travel that day. On Friday evening He had dined with Zacchæus, his house lying, as we are told, between Jerusalem and Jericho.

On Saturday evening, at Bethany, we find He was at a supper, when He was first anointed.

On Sunday morning the Jews who had heard of His arrival with Lazarus, flocked into Bethany to see Him. This was Palm Sunday morning^a.

The concourse going from Jerusalem to see Lazarus, so evident a proof of our Lord's divinity, set the Pharisees on the watch.

^a John xii. 9.

On Sunday He made His first entry into Jerusalem, when the people met Him, and returned with Him, shouting hosannahs. He stopped at Bethphage while the disciples fetched the ass. On this journey it was that, when on the slopes of Mount Olivet, He stopped to weep over the city. He then entered the Temple, and immediately cleansed the court, to shew His power and authority there, and then returned to sleep at Bethany. On this occasion the Greeks desired to see Him. His great object for going into the Temple then was to fulfil the law of Moses, which ordered that the Paschal lamb should be presented in the Temple on the tenth day, before it was sacrificed on the fourteenth; so He, the Paschal lamb this year, willingly offered Himself.

On Tuesday morning He returned, on His way cursed the barren fig-tree, then entered, and again cleansed the Temple, and then taught. (Of this part St. Mark is most accurate.) On this day the children sang their praises to Him in the manner so peculiarly and affectingly mentioned by St. Matthew^b.

On Wednesday, the last day of His public ministry, and the most eventful, He returned to

^b Matt. xxi. 15.

Jerusalem ; on His way the conversation on the fig-tree was renewed^c.

Then He entered the Temple, where were the conversations with the Herodians, Pharisees, and Sadducees ; then the deputation, asking Him by what authority He did those things ; then the parable of the father and two sons, the parable of the vineyard let to husbandmen ; then that of the wedding garment ; then the question about the tribute. Then our Lord's first personal attack on the Scribes^d :—" Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees."

As they left the Temple on Wednesday were the remarks of the disciples on the beauty of the Temple, and the prophecy about the day of judgment^e. Then the supper, and the second anointing at Bethany. Wednesday night closed His public ministry.

Through Thursday He remained quiet at Bethany ; the day before His death, in the evening, He received the last Supper.

From which we now propose to trace the events with more particular reflections. The history of the last Supper will be this :—

1. The Saturday sitting down^f.

^c Mark xi. 20, 26.

^d Mark xii. 38 ; Luke xx. 45.

^e Matt. xxiv.

^f Luke xxii. 14—16.

2. The Paschal supper, and the first cup of wine^s.

3. The washing the feet.

4. The taking and eating again, and the lamb brought in, and the institution of the sacramental bread.

5. Then He was troubled ; Judas going out.

6. Then the institution of the cup of the sacrament, Judas not at it.

7. Then singing the hymn, halleluiah.

II. While they were lying down on the couches at supper, probably the part of the last discourse took place recorded in John xiv., at the end of which are the words of the text,—“ Arise, let us go hence.” It has been suggested that perhaps He arose and said this, seeing the fear of the disciples in the dead of night, gathered in the secluded part of the city, and expecting every moment the coming of Judas to take Him.

They then proceeded to the garden, Gethsemane.

a. “ His disciples followed Him to the Mount of Olives,” knowing well the holy spot to which He had often resorted with them, now for the last time on earth.

“ They crossed the Cedron,” that stream over

^s Luke xxii. 17, 18.

which king David had before passed with his companions in sorrow. I would repeat then here those reflections which we are so prone to make on the garden into which He went. "Gethsemane" means an *olive-press*; an olive is in holy Scripture an emblem of Jesus Christ, and oil of His holy Spirit. It was remarkable that the passion and grave of our Lord were both in a garden. Of the one St. John says, "It was a garden into which He entered;" and again, "There was a garden, and in the garden a tomb."

In a garden Satan overcame the first man, and was overcome by the second; in a garden Adam sinned, and Christ suffered; in a garden Adam ate the pleasant fruit, and Jesus drank the bitter cup; the garden of Adam brought forth fruit with no sweat of his brow, but this was moistened by His sweat, and that bloody; the voice was heard of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, when the first Adam excused himself; in the cold night the second Adam laid Himself down in stillness and silence, to take the curse pronounced on the first Adam. As he left the garden, the first Adam had the sentence pronounced that the earth should bring forth thorns; and it was when in

death He entered the garden of burial that the second Adam was divested of the crown of thorns that He had worn. And there could be no more natural place than this, where nature dies and is again renewed, where the seed perishes and is quickened.

Adam was not alone, he had a help meet for him; and He too took His Church, His apostles, to watch with Him, willing that they should share His sufferings, as they should by and by His glory.

Such was the place of His agony. Think of His agony. It was for you; each drop was spilt for you: your sins wrung His soul; your temper, your covetousness, your coldheartedness, your disobedience; with these drops He will pardon all. And may we not say from all this, He has hallowed the flowers and objects of nature? is not the very care of a garden here made a holy work, a holy pleasure? may not high lessons be seen in each opening bud and fading leaf? and has He not led us to see it by thus choosing a garden for His place of resort.

β. Then comes the prayer; "He was removed from them about a stone's cast;" having first said to the three, "Sit ye here while I go and pray yonder;" viz. the eight at the garden gate;

the three He took with Him. And He began to be sorrowful and very heavy, and said :—"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." He first bid them *watch*, and watch with Him. So He leant on them in His last hour for support, shewing the feebleness of His human nature. Doubtless one reason why He took St. Peter, was that he who was so confident in himself might see how even Jesus prayed to the Father in the hour of trial. He withdrew Himself from them, to shew the duty of privacy in prayer and sorrow. We should not make our prayers public, or make our afflictions a subject of conversation to every one; they are holy things, the voices of God, the signs of His close presence; and we should be still under them: trouble such as Jesus' was should make us still, and wait to hear God's message in it,—like Mary, who, when Lazarus was dead, sat still in the house, till Martha said, "The Master calls for thee."

It was from this circumstance of Jesus Christ withdrawing from His disciples that it has been the custom of the Church to make distinctions of place in assemblies of prayer; the Litany used to be offered in a different part to the prayers, as the Communion service is now.

Then "He was withdrawn from them about a

stone's cast." The word for withdrawn means He was pulled away with violence (*ἀπεσπασθῆ*). "And having knelt down, He prayed, Father, if Thou wilt, take this cup from Me: nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done." What the cup of agony exactly was we do not know; we cannot tell what it was; it was very bitter. Was it the keen bodily pain He should endure to-morrow, and the sorrow of soul He must go through? or was it the near approach of the prince of darkness, whose hour it was, and whose presence He hated? or was it that human hour of approaching death we all have, and so tremble at?

It seems to have been none of these, for if we examine the verse in Hebrews—"He was heard, in that He feared," which seems to refer to our Lord's agony, we find that He was heard in His prayer, and His prayer was granted. So it could not be pain, or the presence of the evil one, or the horrors of death, against which He prayed, for all these He had in full. Besides, He rebuked Peter for exclaiming against His suffering a painful death; and He, the king of martyrs, whose courage was so great, would never shrink from dying. It may have been our sins which pressed so heavily on Him, a thought of the im-

penitent Jews, or of His own disciple Judas who should betray Him, or of *all*, who should forsake Him. The sins and sorrows of other men He always sighed for, not Himself. When "He sighed" and was "troubled," it was when about to speak to Judas; when "He wept," it was at Lazarus' grave, or over Jerusalem; and when the daughters of Jerusalem wept, He said,—
"Weep not for Me, but for yourselves."

So we learn from Him resignation in sorrow, as we learnt before privacy in sorrow, and the blessing of leaning on friends in trouble.

"Then an angel came to comfort Him;" to comfort Him the comforter of all; surely shewing forth God's readiness to answer prayer and to comfort sorrow.

γ. "Then He cometh to the disciples and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter," (St. Matthew does not mention this being said to St. Peter, but St. Mark does, because he wrote his gospel under St. Peter's guidance, and the apostle would not leave out anything which would shew his own weakness, and how, after such sure confidence of watching, he had so soon and remarkably fallen): "Simon, sleepest thou? hast thou not been able to watch with Me one hour?" To Peter alone,—touching, heart-rending

words,—“watch *with Me*,” who have so often watched and prayed through sleepless nights for you; and now, against all your promises, *not one hour’s* watching! St. Luke, the Evangelist of compassion, adds this reason for their sleeping,—they slept “*for sorrow*.”

Then He returned the second time; and mark a slight change in the words:—“My Father, if this cup cannot pass from Me except I drink it, Thy will be done.” Here He used not the words, “If it be possible.” “And He returned and found them sleeping again, for their eyes were heavy.” And St. Mark adds, writing from St. Peter, who, being present, could better describe the whole scene, “they knew not what to answer Him.” “And leaving them, He departed the third time, saying the same words.” “Then cometh He the third time to His disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed.” My need of your watching with Me is over; it is all over; you now can do no more for Me. The three times of our Lord coming to His disciples have been by old writers made much of. One (Jerome) says that these three sleepings were witnesses of the three He raised from the dead. Again,

another (Hilary) says they were types of His three comings after His death : 1. He rebuked them for sleeping, as in His resurrection He rebuked their hardness of heart for being slow to believe ; 2. He said nothing, as when He gave His people peace by His sending the Holy Ghost at Pentecost ; and 3. He said, " Take your rest," as He will at the judgment-day. At least we cannot say there is nothing in this use of three.

There is something, too, very remarkable about the stillness of all this event. It is midnight, and silence, and darkness ; and although the scene was one of such awful interest, the disciples *slept* : a likeness of the day when He will again come to judgment, in the world's awful stillness of the night of sin. Judas came, though after His reproof to His disciples there seemed a calm for a moment ; so will the world be hushed before He comes again, saying " Peace, peace, when there is no peace." So in the parable of the ten virgins ; it is midnight when the bridegroom comes, and they slumbered and slept ; there is no sound without, no thought within, that rouses them up as if they heard the step approaching, the well-known step of the Lord returning ; the sound of the thief in the night, the movement of angelic armies. But it is all

dead stillness ; the midnight cry is heard, and that so deep and still that it has been thought to be but the slumbers of conscience awakened, or the whisper of an angel.

So when Babylon was taken, it was night : not a voice is heard, or a form seen, but a silent hand writes upon the wall, and all was lost.

So in Egypt, at dead of night the angel passed along over the houses, and at midnight was the cry heard, and the first-born were dead !

So at Sodom. There was something tremendously awful in the calm of their tranquillity, as it must have appeared to Abraham. The sun set as usual ; Lot sat in the gate ; the two strangers came ; they take Lot away, and the cities are no more. Early in the morning Abraham looked, and behold the smoke went up as of a furnace.

So our Lord's first coming ; it was in the stillness of night, nothing more than usual ; He rises by moonlight in the garden ; the city slept,—friends and foes, all were hushed ; the guards were sleeping around, and behold, He who was dead walked about alone in the garden !

So are God's visitations, in the noiseless step of an angel, or a spirit, or a shadow, or a dream, with solitude and stillness. So are the living

wheels which make no noise, rolling on for ever. So is the calm quiet sky, and the still watches of stars, which keep watch like outposts on the dread silence of eternity.

So it will be at the last; He will come as a thief in the night,—silent, quick, unexpected. *Oh watch!*

God's comings and goings to our souls are past finding out; His ways are in silence and solitude. There is something of awfulness in the stillness and quiet in which they come and go. Men love noise, excitement, company, trying to flee from God, who dwells in impenetrable calm; when alone they must think of God. How much this is the case in death; there is nothing in death so striking as that dreadful unearthly stillness which is around it,—profound, and deep, and still; so different to the feverish stir of life. You know what I mean by the quiet of a death-chamber, where all stand silent, looking on, and only the heavy breath of him who dies is heard. The silence is arresting, as if God were come down to take the soul. So in silence God speaks with the good, and wakes the conscience of the wicked.

All these seem but signs of the scene which is on the other side the grave; when all the

noise of the world will be far away, its concerns unheard and forgotten, and we shall stand alone with God, in the world where God is, where there are no wars, no buying, no selling, no planting, no marrying, no change of seasons, no times of days, and months, and years, but the calm stillness of eternity, in which the sinner will stand alone with God. So was there silence when the voice of Christ woke the disciples, saying all was over. The Judge was standing by in the profound quiet of the garden of Gethsemane.

So, blessed Jesus, may we in calm thought and prayer await Thy second coming ; and when Thou comest, grant that we may not be found wanting !

SERMON XVII.

THE CONDEMNATION.

I have heard the blasphemy of the multitude ; and fear is on every side, while they conspire together against Me, and take their counsel to take away My life.—PSALM xxxi. 15.

IF you were called to watch the sufferings of a friend, though they came but in the common course of God's providence, you would grieve to see that ; you would feel that inward wish, almost, if possible, to share his sufferings, and would mind no denial to ease his pains.

How much more if that suffering were our fault, and if to save us from difficulty or danger such friend had brought that affliction on himself. Then should we not still more wish to share his distress, and if not share it, ease it? But when that sufferer is the Lord of glory? when He who walks along the road of sorrow is the Son of God, the Maker of mankind ; when it is His funeral train we are called on to follow, His marks of blood we are called to trace ; when

we think what He gave up for us, how great His humiliation, how great once His glory, shall we not follow in sorrow still more? And we are called in this week to follow in His footsteps, to walk with Him, and see Him weep, and bleed, and die for our sakes.

We do not think of Him enough, or dwell enough on His sufferings. Men pass them over so lightly; and you, perhaps, many of you, will scarce think of Him and His sorrows through the coming week; as if His blood had not dropped for you, or the woes He bent beneath were not for your sake. And yet, if you ever think, if you ever feel your sins, if ever you dread the judgment-day, if ever you long to reach heaven after this life, why do you not delight to dwell on all His sufferings and sorrows, since all were for your sakes? And the same love which then led Him on to die for you, leads Him now to pardon and to bless you.

But we will follow His night of sorrows.

The palace of Caiaphas was filled as it appears all night with the chief priests and officers waiting for their victim. They were enraged at not having been able to take Him before, and now at last He was brought in, our blessed Lord among the gathered rulers. How wonderfully

were those verses of the psalm fulfilled: "The rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His anointed. They cast their heads together with one consent, and were confounded; they spake against Him with false tongues, and compassed Him about with words of hatred."

Peter and John followed, Peter afar off—being a likeness of the Christian Church, who must always follow Christ in His sufferings, though afar off, because she can never be entirely like Him. He feared to follow closer, for the great crowd there was who were leading our Lord on to the trial.

The place into which they all went was a hall; in the upper part of it the chief-priests and high-priests were questioning the blessed Jesus; at the lower end, among the attendants, St. Peter stopped.

It was now dark, and probably this end of the hall was dark, save from the fire lit on the hearth, around which a group of persons were collecting, for "the night was cold." St. Peter sat among them to see the end: and, as St. Mark adds, was warming himself towards the light. The maid who had let him in now saw him more clearly as he sat, and said, "This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth. Art not thou also one

of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not; woman, I do not know Him. So he denied before them all."

St. Peter, uneasy at being seen, got up, went into the porch, and the cock crew. His mind was probably so absorbed, as not to notice the crowing of the cock, or to recognise in it the fulfilment of our Saviour's prophecy. Then we are told another maid saw him, or probably the same maid with another: "This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth." And these are the only women mentioned in our Lord's trials; nor were these concerned against Him: on the contrary, women seem never to have acted against Him. He was anointed for burial by women; women are the last at His grave, the first at the sepulchre; to a woman He first appeared; women bewailed and lamented Him, ministered to His wants in Galilee; a heathen woman interceded for Him; above all, "He was born of a woman," and she who was the cause of man's first sin, had but small part in his second great sin, the death of Jesus.

We must now endeavour to trace the feelings of St. Peter. He was in a state of evident alarm, in a dark hall in the midst of enemies; at the end of it, Jesus standing, treated with indignity,

which must have shaken St. Peter's confidence, that He who he thought to be the Son of God should bear thus to be cruelly treated and spit upon by the priests and their servants. He had now probably hidden himself, for we find that the next accusation was on his speech : "Thou art a Galilean, for thy *speech* bewrayeth thee." Peter said, "I know not what thou sayest ; and he began to curse and to swear : " sad instance of the result of yielding to temptation and doubt !

Such is the story of the apostle. For awhile he forgot his Master in himself. And so it often is with warm, zealous persons like him ; they promise more than they have stedfastness and principle to perform. His fall, indeed, is overruled for good, by comforting us if inconsistent and failing, shewing us how even those who lived nearest Jesus fell. Yet there was this excuse for Peter, which we have not ; he had not yet received the Holy Spirit, since Jesus was "not yet glorified."

But though Peter had forgotten Jesus, Jesus had not forgotten him ; for immediately, while he was yet speaking, the cock crew, and the Lord turned and looked on Peter. Though he had gone into the dark, and thought no eye beheld him, yet there was the eye of one upon

him who was then being buffeted and ill-treated, and to Him St. Peter could not help turning. What was expressed in His look we cannot tell. It spoke of all Peter's long intimacy with Jesus; of the last conversation they had about his denial; and to all this was added the sad treatment He was receiving, while His friend forsook Him and denied Him.

He looked, and the spell of Satan was dissolved; He looked, and he wept bitterly; He looked, and the darkness fled, and light filled his mind; all seemed plain to him now; he came to himself and went out, weeping bitterly. Here is the beginning of repentance; we should see Christ's eye ever on us, and when we have sinned, or feel temptation press us sore, we should retire into the solitude and stillness of the night to weep, and remember the words of Jesus.

The Lord looked on Peter, and he repented. Man is weak, only Christ is strong; Satan had wellnigh overcome the chief apostle, but Jesus had prayed for him, and his faith did not finally fail. It was the power shewn forth in our Lord's look which made Peter repent, not Peter's own power.

He remembered the words of Jesus, and

then repented. How blessed for us to have treasured up in our minds the word of God, which may recall us when wandering from the fold! How often have we already found that in moments of strong temptation some Word of God has come before us, calling us back from sin, or comforting us when doubting! we can never study or remember the Bible too much, for it has an inward power in it which will be shewn in us some day when we most need it.

"The Lord turned." Gracious Jesus, never willing that Thy sheep should wander far, but always having Thine eye upon them, though they lurk in the dark shadows of sin! ever trying to stay them by Thy voice, or eye, or hand! ever grieved when we sin, and fixing on us that full, earnest gaze of sorrow, which calls us back to weep and think!

Oh, how can we go on in sin, in any sin, while we know His eye is ever on us, and we cannot escape it?

There seems a difference between the Evangelists in the matter of the cock-crowing. St. Mark says: "Before the cock crow twice;" St. Luke and St. Matthew, "Before the cock crow" (at all). Probably St. Matthew means

not "twice crowing," but before the second period of the cock-crowing, viz., three in the morning.

Then comes our Lord's trial before Caiaphas. How meek and gentle His bearing ! He ever refers them to His teaching in public ; in secret He had said nothing. Then the man struck Him, probably fearing lest his master, the high-priest, should be overcome by the wisdom and calmness of our blessed Lord. How meekly He bore that, — "Why smitest thou Me?" How little do we bear the indignation of others as gently ! we are so fretful and vexed if they injure us, so inclined to go as far as we *can* to shew our annoyance ; yet He who had done nothing amiss, bore this indignity without a word.

And now the "chief-priests and the elders were seeking false witnesses against Jesus, to put Him to death." And their witness is remarkable. You will see, they alter the words of Jesus. One said He had said, "I am able to destroy the temple of God, and build it in three days ;" the other, "I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will raise it up." Our Lord's prophecy was different ;

but this false recital of it only served to prove more strikingly still His own meaning :—" *I am able*,"—His power and freewill in the matter of death. Again, "*I will*."

And now the high-priest, perhaps impatient at being thus thwarted by the contradiction of false witnesses, and at His meek silence, arose up and stood in the midst. The silence of the second Adam expiated the defence and excuses of the first Adam : "I will keep My mouth as it were with a bridle, while the ungodly is in My sight. I held My tongue, and spake nothing : I kept silence, yea even from good words, but it was pain and grief unto Me."

Then—"I adjure Thee by God that Thou tell us if Thou be the Christ." He said : "Thou hast said I am," so making His enemies confess Him. "Sitting on the right hand of power." Sitting implies continuance and stability ; "hereafter," near at hand.

Then took place the rending of the garment. The garment symbolizes the Church. The high-priest was covered with mosaic symbols ; so the garment was typical.

Then follows the condemnation.

The high-priest had probably now withdrawn,

and left Him to the guards ; and the men who held Jesus mocked and beat Him : some began to spit on Him.

“ His visage was more marred than any man’s ”—He gave His back to the smiter, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.”

SERMON XVIII.

THE ATTENDANTS ON THE FOUR LAST SCENES.

NO. I. THE LAST SUPPER.

And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him.—LUKE xxii. 14.

WE are approaching that solemn season when Jesus Christ offered up Himself upon the cross to die for our sins. The season of Lent draws to its close, and the feelings of the Christian should be preparing to celebrate the sadder ones of Holy-week and Good Friday. There is a world where there is no time; where years do not mark the portions of eternity; if they did, how would the spirits of just men made perfect, and the innumerable company of angels, remember with their loudest praise on this returning season the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world? But they are beyond the limit of time, beyond the necessity of any further redemption. For us it is different; we are yet on this side eternity; we are yet within

the reach of sin ; we may yet be lost, we may fall from our faith, we may after all become cast-aways. The cross is still our only hope, and He who hung upon it the sinner's only friend. To us, then, the returning season of that Saviour's death should bring feelings saddened at the reflections of our own sins, brightened at the thought that *this* was our accepted time, *this* our day of salvation.

Among the many infirmities which Christians have to deplore, there are very few more painful than lukewarmness, and want of interest in the great concerns of another world. That Good Friday comes, and they cannot though they would, feel touched at the sufferings of Jesus ; they cannot sufficiently feel that *their* sins were forgiven at Calvary, or called down to that sad event the Son of God from heaven. It is the same with all the rest, Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide ; we cannot feel them as we wish, we cannot get rid of many earthly feelings and worldly considerations connected with them. This is partly from habit, partly from depending on faith, not on sight ; partly from finding it difficult to feel acutely at any time what we have professed or tried to feel acutely at all times ; partly, too, it is because we do not force our

thoughts enough, we do not meditate enough, nor pray enough, thereby making the things of faith almost things of sight.

As, then, we approach the holy time, it will be as well to contemplate with prayer the subjects we wish to feel. Let us, then, strive to make ourselves one of the attendants at the last scenes of the Saviour's life, and as He was to them what He is to us,—the same Saviour, God, and Friend,—in viewing their feelings let us realize them too; and in contemplating their characters, let us take comfort for our own.

To accomplish this we will consider separately some of the last important scenes in our Redeemer's life, and taking the attendants upon them, examining into their characters and feelings, we shall find some one among them exactly suiting ourselves: so that the scenes which touched, comforted, warned, and instructed them, will do the same for us; where their impressions were light, we shall find some among us who have been subject to light impressions too; where theirs were vivid, some of ours have been vivid too; where theirs were lasting, some of ours have been lasting too.

We will take the scenes of the last Supper, the garden of Gethsemane, the judgment-hall,

and the Cross, and with God's blessing examine the characters and actions of each party present at each; and, comparing them with ourselves, prepare ourselves for commemorating the scenes at which they were present.

I. Let us, then, take the scene and characters of the last Supper,—a subject connected with that which has lately occupied our attention; but we will now view it only in the light of being one of our Saviour's closing scenes.

It was on the Saturday before Good Friday that Jesus arrived at Bethany, a village a short distance from the city of Jerusalem. Lazarus, who had been with Him since his resurrection, now formed one of His company. At the village of Bethany a supper was made that night, at which Mary anointed His feet. Throughout Sunday He remained in Bethany, whither great multitudes from the city resorted, who, having come up to the feast, were attracted by the intelligence that Jesus was in the neighbouring village, and Lazarus also, whom He had raised from the dead,—a circumstance which induced the chiefs among the Jews to desire to deprive Lazarus of life, as well as Him who had raised him from death. This day is usually called Palm-Sunday, to celebrate the event which some think

took place on the following day, Monday,—the riding into Jerusalem on the ass, attended by the disciples, shouting Hosannah as He went along. The city, thronged to excess by the multitude who had come from all parts to the Passover, was thrown into a state of confusion by the visit of the wonderful Stranger. On His way “He wept” over the city, and arriving late in the evening at the Temple, and remaining there but a few moments, returned to Bethany for the night. His appearance in the Temple, and short stay there, was for the purpose of fulfilling His office as the Paschal Lamb. The lamb^a was appointed to be taken up from the flock, and consecrated to its peculiar purpose on the tenth, four days before it was slain, on the fourteenth. Our Lord therefore appeared in the Temple on the fourth day before His crucifixion. On Tuesday He returned from Bethany, and on His way cursed the barren fig-tree, (expecting to find the *winter* crop of figs, on which the poor subsisted). On His arrival at the city He repaired again to the Temple, where the children, excited by the cries and acclamations of the multitude, joined the acclaiming crowd, and gathered round the Saviour to proclaim His glory. This was fol-

^a Exod. xii. 3, 6.

lowed by the cleansing of the Temple from the buyers and sellers. On Wednesday, the last day of His public ministry, our Lord returned to the Temple. Here He was taken up in answering many subtle questions put to Him by the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians,—the parable of the father and the two sons, and the wedding garment. After these come the prophecies concerning the destruction of the Temple, and the last day. In the evening of Wednesday was the supper at which our Lord was entertained at Bethany, where Mary anointed Him for His burial. This closed the last day of our Saviour's earthly ministry. He did not again appear in public till His closing scene—till the Lamb set aside for the sacrifice was led forth without a word to the slaughter.

This, then, brings us to Thursday morning, the day on which our Lord, with His twelve disciples, celebrated the feast of the Passover. The history of the preparation for, and the ordering of this, you all are acquainted with. It was the evening before He died; it was the last time they were to be together;—the room had been prepared by the order of Jesus. When they sat down, He took the first cup used at the supper. Then came the washing of the disciples' feet,

mentioned by St. John. Our blessed Lord having sat down again, the paschal lamb was brought in, and our Lord "brake the bread,"—the first part of the Christian Sacrament; then followed our Lord's first agony;—He was troubled and distressed in spirit, and He said, "One of you shall betray Me." They all asked Him the sad question, "Is it I?" Only St. John mentions the conversation between St. Peter, himself, and our Lord, about the traitor; probably it was a secret conversation. The Jews, like the Romans, lay on couches at their feasts, each containing three. Our Lord reclined on one with St. John; St. Peter might be near the upper end, at the other side of Jesus; so his head and St. John's would both be near Christ's person. This explains the circumstance of St. John's head resting on our Lord's bosom, and would enable the conversation to be carried on in private. After this is our Lord's remark—"That thou doest, do quickly," and the going out of Judas. Then the prediction of Peter's denial, and the hymn or psalm sung after the supper. The supper being ended, our Saviour began the remarkable discourse found in John xiv., xv., xvi., and the prayer contained in the xviith. It appears He delayed their going out; so at the end of John xiv. we find He said—

“ Arise, let us go hence ;” but still they did not go. It is probable that our Lord, who knew from the first all which was coming on Him, and whose Eye had watched the movements of Judas every time he went out, would purposely delay His departure even after supper, so as to time His arrival there, so that the traitor might find Him. At the last hour of the second watch of the night, or between the hours of our eleven and twelve o’clock, He left the chamber of the Passover for the garden of Gethsemane.

II. Having, then, traced our Lord’s actions throughout the Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of Holy-week, and having particularly examined the scene of the last Supper, I will proceed to examine the characters of those present, with reference to their feelings and conduct under their immediate situation, as a lesson for us.

How remarkable and striking is the whole sacred history ! If it exalts any one character as being under the influence of divine grace, it immediately mentions the fault or error to which it was liable. There is no man perfect. If they who lived with Christ, those who followed Him from the house of mourning to the grave of death ; they who sat with Him at the last sad

feast, gathered round His cross, and saw Him rise,—if they still were sinful, disobedient, and weak, how much more we! if they needed to watch and to pray, how much more we! if they who saw Him sinned, how much more we, who have never seen Him! The Bible is a picture of life; we read it, and there is every character we see around us, all just as they are now,—the passionate, the cold, the lukewarm, the energetic, the indolent, all influenced by God's grace, all gathered round the Saviour for pardon, all subject to their peculiar infirmities.

a. Take Peter. What was he? Bold, daring, warm-hearted, and generous; a family forsaken to follow Christ; ever first to promise, ever boldest to act, though without a thought. Who ever loved his Saviour like Simon Peter? Read through the sacred story; you always find Peter foremost in the cause of Christ, among the first to forsake all and follow Him: the first to step on the rolling ocean to come to Christ; the first to answer to the pathetic appeal, "Will ye also go away?" "Lord, to whom shall we go?" the first to promise to die with Him, but not deny Him; the first to strike for His defence in the garden; one of the chosen three at the house of Jairus, the mount of glory, and the garden of

agony. None ever was so warm, so zealous, so eager, as the apostle Peter. But Peter had his faults, and they were great. He did not reckon on his own weakness. He did not know himself—he trusted to himself; he was warm, but hasty; ardent, but ambitious; resolute in intention, but failing sometimes in practice; the first to promise, yet the first to deny; the first, again, at the tomb of his risen Master. Such was Peter; such was he at the last supper, such was he when he received the Eucharist for the first time.

There are many characters in the Church of Christ like Peter, subject to the same failures. If he received the Sacrament from the hands of Christ Himself, they may from His ministers. Who are they? They are those who have warm hearts, strong affections, high hopes: they resolve to do a great deal, and often fail when it comes to the point; they are keenly touched with the importance of religion at the death-bed of a friend—at reading a book which touches them—at hearing a sermon which convinces them of sin. They go away declaring, “I will forsake all and follow Thee.” At times the love of Jesus, and the value of His death, beam on their soul like a ray of light on a benighted

mind, and they cry out like Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Another hour, and they are passionate, violent, excited; they plunge into a sea of temptation, reckless of consequences, without the strength to keep them up, or the courage to bear them through it. And yet they meant well—they *thought* they should have done better. How many a one is there like Peter! Do you feel your character is like his? are you of the same temper? Then, as he received the Sacrament, so may you. It will give you strength to act as well as to determine; it will give vigour and continuance to the feelings which led you to receive it. You will feel afterwards your warm temper,—so did Peter.

β. Take St. Thomas. Thomas was a waverer, a doubter, led to follow Christ by the persuasion of others. He probably always doubted, until his eyes beheld, his hands touched, the riven side and the pierced feet of His Saviour. Could this be the Messiah, this the carpenter's son, this the son of Mary? Could this be the prophet which should come into the world?

How many are like Thomas! Anxious to do right, he adopts religion, but at the very beginning he finds difficulties: he wants to believe,

but he cannot fully ; he wants to love more than he does, but a thousand obstacles stand in his way. " Can religion be true ? " he thinks ; " would God have made so many who would be lost ? How difficult, too, it is to reconcile Scripture with Scripture, doctrine with doctrine, Calvinism with Arminianism, election with free-will, Church discipline with dissent. Why are so many wrong, so few right ? What reason have I," he says, " to think this pure, and that not ? I am told to find my peace in Christ—how do I know I can ? I have often prayed, but found no answer ; I have pleaded promises, and found no return ; I wept tears of sorrow, and found no peace ; I have prayed for children, and they turn out ill. Is there anything in religion at all ? had not I better give it all up ? can I, with these doubts, be an acceptable person to God in receiving His holy Sacrament ? " Do I speak to such a one now ? do I address one with Thomas's nature, so different from the warm enthusiasm of Peter ? do I speak to one who draws back from the Lord's Table because he doubts the promises of God, or doubts his own fitness on account of his unbelief ? Remember, Thomas was among them who received the first holy Sacrament. Then do you the same.

γ. There was St. Matthew,—Matthew, the *man of business*. His occupation in life might have haunted his mind with anxieties, difficulties, cares about earthly occupations. He had but a short time since left the receipt of custom; he had forsaken the world to follow Christ.

How common a case is that of Matthew!

A man is engrossed in business; his waking thoughts, his sleeping dreams, are on the same subject; it haunts him at church, it disturbs his hours of devotion, it is present when he reads his Bible. Oh, the cares, the business of life! It so fills and distracts his mind, that he dare not approach the altar, because his mind is so engrossed with the concerns of life. Do I speak to such an one? Surely I must. Do you on this account stay away from the Sacrament? Stay away no longer; follow Matthew's example; come and follow Christ; forsake the engrossing thoughts of the world, and for a while forcing yourself to think lightly of them, come to the holy Feast.

δ. There was Nathanael. He was remarkable for a simple mind; guilelessness was the character our Lord gave him. He never asked a question on being called, but followed Him at once.

Simple-mindedness,—how beautiful a *prepara-*

tion for religion, and yet subject to how many difficulties, though perhaps the finest of all characters! Such is the man who feels his own ignorance deeply, who feels his inferiority to others, who wants to know more than he does, who thinks more knowledge is requisite than he has yet, and though humble, is yet happy. We meet with such characters sometimes. I have heard such refuse to receive the Sacrament because they feel they are ignorant; such, who have humbly wished to love God, yet so little confident of their knowledge and powers, as on that account to draw away from the holy Feast. There *may* be too great a diffidence, though it is on the best side; it is, if we may call it so, a happy error. But yet, when it keeps us from means of grace, *it is an error*, and should be guarded against. Do I speak to such? Come, like Nathanael, to the Lord, nothing frightened at your own ignorance, nothing daunted at your own simplicity, and receive grace and peace at the hands of your ever-watchful Redeemer.

ε. There was John. I will not dwell on him now, as he will come into our consideration on a subsequent occasion, as one of the characters of the garden scene. John was full of love; his disposition would attach itself closely to all the

deeper ties. How many such are there among us, whose whole soul is wrapt round some idol of this world, which they love more than God! Engrossed in the interests and concerns of a family, they feel unfit to approach the sacred Feast.

You that may be like him, do not on this account stay away from the Sacrament. Do not say, "Because I love my family too well, therefore I will not come;" but come there, that the world may be held less dear; come there to receive the power to love God above all. It is a means of fixing your affection more firmly and independently on Christ. John received that Sacrament, so do you.

ζ. There was Simon Zelotes. He was, as tradition says, of a hot and lively temper, yet warm and hearty when he espoused a cause. There are many such, who might, from their tendency, feel they were not serious enough to come to the Sacrament. Do not let this hinder you: come to the holy Table.

We might go through others, had we time. I have mentioned some; surely some are like all these. Copy their example; let your different dispositions meet here one and the same, and gather round the memorial of this final scene of your Redeemer's life. Do not draw back any

more, so as only you love religion. And if, like Peter, you are warm-hearted and hasty; like Thomas, doubting and hesitating; like Matthew, engrossed in the business of life; like Nathanael, simple and ignorant; like John, affectionate and tender; like Simon, earnest and lively; at this one point let all your differences be destroyed, and gathering, like them, around your Master's Board, receive grace to correct your dispositions, remembering that you, "being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

SERMON XIX.

THE ATTENDANTS ON THE FOUR LAST SCENES.

No. II. THE GARDEN. THE THREE APOSTLES.

And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and He saith to His disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. And He taketh with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy.—MARK xiv. 32, 33.

I PURPOSED examining the four last scenes of our Saviour's life, and the characters attendant on each. We have considered the scene of the last Supper, and the characters of those who gathered round the table. We examined their characters with a view to our own conduct separately and severally under similar circumstances. We will now pass on to the second scene of importance before His Death,—the agony in the garden. We will consider this in itself, and the characters present at it.

I. We discovered, then, that the Supper being ended, Jesus and His disciples left the house of the Passover, and set out for the Mount of Olives, between the hours of eleven and twelve, or in the

second watch of the Jewish night. The period of the year was spring, (the vernal equinox,) and the day of the month not quite two days before the full of the moon,—in which case the moon would be shining far past her meridian, and the night enlightened to a late hour. The neighbourhood of Jerusalem was full of gardens, and Gethsemane, or the garden of winepresses, was one of them. The quarter was on the road to Bethany, and the family of Lazarus might have some possessions there. The distance from the city walls to Gethsemane was about three-quarters of a mile. On the way there, Jesus, as we learn from St. Matthew, conversed with His disciples,—“ All ye shall be offended because of Me this night^a ;” and predicted Peter’s denial, which, being the third time of its repetition, agreed with the numbers of the denial, and the number of the tests of his sincerity afterwards. He had now reached the garden ; He had crossed the foaming torrent of the Cedron, swelled by the spring-floods, and at the entrance of the garden, within the gates, left the eight apostles, while the other three He took with Him to a more solitary part by Himself. Now followed the agony, which seems to have lasted one hour. It

^a Matt. xxvi. 31—35.

was the strong struggle of His human nature recoiling from the approaching cross ; it was the keenness of a man's feelings supported by the love of God. How strikingly does it bring home to us, in our hours of trouble, doubt, or anguish, the blessed truth that " we have not an High-Priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities ! " Shall so much love receive so little gratitude ; so intense an agony call forth so weak a service ?

The agony was over, and the Father sent His angel to comfort His Son. As a man, how desolate He must have felt ! the only friends who had been with Him through His toilsome journey on earth, now slept and slumbered in this awful moment. They could not watch even *one hour* by Him who through so many days had soothed their sorrows, cheered their drooping spirits, and raised their hopes. The eye of Jesus, now piercing the distance, saw the approach of the band of soldiers, and He went forward to meet them. Then came the kiss which betrayed Him, then the blow struck by St. Peter in his Master's defence. (Peter's name is not mentioned as having done this by the first three Evangelists, because he was alive when they wrote. For the same reason, the name of

Malchus is mentioned by John only.) And then they led Him away, and His friends forsook Him and fled. There was a young man, St. Mark tells us, who went in with Jesus. Some think this was John, but it is not likely, for he had fled. It might have been the owner of the garden, or the man at whose house they had eaten the passover; we do not know. And thus ends the Agony. What this agony exactly was we cannot tell. It must have been very bitter; it may have consisted in an awful horror of sin, and a fearful perception of God's absence, which an imperfect being knows nothing of. It shews us this,—that the most perfect state of human nature shrinks from suffering, and therefore that we may pray against calamity,—ready to bear it when God sends it.

II. Having contemplated briefly the general scene of the Agony, let us now proceed to follow the first-mentioned plan, to examine the characters and conduct of those who were present at it.

We must mark the situation of the three apostles whose character and conduct we are to examine. Their duty was to watch and pray.

1. First, in order to aid their suffering Lord; secondly, to be themselves prepared against the strong temptation which was just approaching.

2. We find they did not watch, they did not pray, but slept; and consequently, though a feeble effort was made by one of them, they did fall beneath the hour of temptation, and when Jesus was taken they forsook Him and fled.

3. They must have expected and intended otherwise before they entered the garden, on account of their great love for their Master, and their great distress at His removal.

We learn, then, that their intentions were good; they were warned to provide against coming temptation, in spite of their good intention, by prayer and watchfulness. They did not pray, they did not watch, and they did fall; and men of three very different characters all did this. Now apply this to ourselves.

Here we are, on the near approach of the commemoration of Christ's Agony; we profess, and many of us do feel, a love, a deep love, for Him; that is, we intend well, like the three, for Him. He tells us, nevertheless, to be ever watching and praying; we neglect the command, (perhaps for sorrow and despair), and then we fall; and men among us of all different characters do this.

Thus our case is like theirs; let us trace the two cases in each particular, dwelling especially on similarity of individual character.

I said that before the apostles entered the garden they intended well towards Jesus, they loved Him with a devoted heart, fervently. We have no reason to doubt this; of all the apostles these three had shewn Him most love. How tenderly had St. John been attached to Jesus! He was the disciple whom Jesus loved; he had forsaken all and followed Christ; he had wished for fire from heaven to avenge his Master; St. John was always one of the three who were with Jesus. A few hours before he had rested on Jesus' breast at the supper, the only one that did it. St. John alone had dared to ask Jesus who should betray Him. St. Peter did not dare. And afterwards, St. John was at the cross, he alone, and Jesus gave His mother to his charge. St. John was among the first at the sepulchre, and among the last of those of whom Jesus spoke. Did not St. John love his Master? Did he not mean Him well? He was not so bold and open in his speech as St. Peter, but was not his love as deep, as sure, as lasting? Then what I said was true, St. John's attention towards Christ was good. And so was St. Peter's,—the bold, warm-hearted Peter, did not he love Christ? He, too, had forsaken all; he had always been His boldest friend; he stepped into the sea to come to Him; he was

the only one who spoke when Jesus said, "Will ye also go away?" "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." St. Peter alone said, "Though all men forsake Thee, yet will not I; I will die with Thee, but not deny Thee." He even continued saying so to the last moment ere they entered the garden. St. Peter it was who wept bitterly for his sin against such a Master; St. Peter was among the first at the sepulchre, and afterwards told Christ, in those beautiful and emphatic words, "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." None could love Jesus so warmly, so boldly, so deeply, as that affectionate, devoted heart. Then he had a good intention toward Christ.

And St. James. We do not know so much of St. James's love for Christ, but the very fact of our Lord taking him so often with the other two apart with Himself, shews he was a peculiar object of His care. He was a cousin, too, by birth, of the Saviour's. We have no reason to doubt St. James's love and good intention towards Jesus, even above the rest; and besides, he was the first martyr who died for Jesus Christ. Then St. James, when he came into the garden, loved the Lord. They all three did. And why should they not? How good had He been to

them. How often they had seen His power and shared His sorrows, and *now*, in His agony too, how much more reason to feel for Him. And then when, added to their love, He was suffering so much; when He had taken His leave; when He was going to leave them alone; when to-morrow He was to be crowned with thorns, scourged, and crucified; if they ever loved Him before, surely they would love Him now.

Thus we learn that the best intention, without especial prayer, will not keep us from falling into sin, in the hour of temptation. I speak to many who have good intentions about Jesus Christ; there must be many who have often said and felt from their heart, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Many who have wept at the thought of what Christ suffered; many who have known He was their only Saviour, who have tried to walk on the waves of this world's troubles to lay hold upon Him; many who have felt they would die with Him, but not deny Him. Are there not many who *have felt*, who *do feel*, this? and yet is that feeling, that resolution alone, enough to keep you from falling in the hour of temptation? Your own experience answers *no*; and if the apostles fell, how much more you.

We have seen, then, the fact of their good intention with regard to Jesus, and we have seen the same in you. But theirs was not enough, nor is yours.

And now some one might say, "But disposition makes a great difference: some men by nature bear up better; they were different to us, or we to them. All would not be so." This is far from true; all dispositions are in this respect the same: without the grace of God they fall. Natural temper is not religion; nothing to do with it. A man may be endowed with every intellectual power, and love every intellectual pursuit; he may be the idol of those who know him; his disposition may suit him to fill well every position in society; he may be an experienced and judicious employer, a sober, industrious labourer; a useful, conscientious servant, a kind, considerate master, an honest tradesman, an accomplished scholar, an affectionate and faithful friend. These things he may be by nature, and yet be living without God in the world. Natural disposition, however good, can never do instead of religion. Then, as far as the need of prayer against temptation, all need it equally; all, of every disposition, like the three apostles. Nothing could be more opposite than the cha-

racters of the three apostles. Let us examine them, and then we shall see that there are many of us like them, who consequently need grace as much as they.

1. *Take St. Peter*, whom we have already partly examined. From the first a follower of John the Baptist, he was led, by the persuasion of his brother, to take up the cause of Christ. A strong conviction of sin seems to have been one great cause of his adopting this resolution, since we soon after find him on his knees before Christ, declaring he was "*a sinful man*." Once embarked in the cause of his Master, St. Peter is first to fear no evil if his Lord be present, even to walk on the untrodden sea; the first to say he would never leave Him, the first to confess "Thou art the Christ;" the first to promise to die with Him, but not deny Him; the first to strike a blow in His defence; the first to run to the sepulchre. With these striking proofs of his faith and love, we turn with some surprise to an irresolution as remarkable as his faith had been eminent: "Bid me come unto Thee on the water," is followed immediately by, "Lord, save me;" and his promise of never denying Him is seconded by a denial. His heart yet lingered after the world, and was not yet

resolute in Christian faith. The scene of the transfiguration, the death-bed of Jairus' daughter, and the Agony of Gethsemane, still fresh in his memory or before his eyes, he slept in the garden and denied Him in the hall.

The cause of these faults in St. Peter was the same which gave rise to the admirable parts of his character — *warmth of feeling*; added to this, hastiness of decision, and neglect of consequences, which usually attend such characters, were partly causes of his downfall. Religion is the subject which of all others draws out the feelings and excites the imagination, and consequently, they in whose character these two are allowed too great an influence, will frequently err. Warm, hearty, inconsiderate, and rash, yet affectionate, honest, and well-intending,—how many a Christian is like St. Peter.

Take the man of warm temper and ardent feelings. He is convinced of sin; he learns that there is a pardon in the blood and merits of Jesus Christ; he clings to the hope with zeal and joy: or he does not understand as yet so much of religion, and he is anxiously seeking for it; in everything he is violent and hasty: a view strikes him as true, or as having some truth in it, and he instantly grasps it as necessary to salvation; what

he loves he adores, what he dislikes he hates ; he is for ever making strong resolutions, which he as often breaks ; he fixes his affections on some human object, and finds his affection idolatry and his motives false ; he is betrayed into making strong speeches, strong remarks, on the subject of religion ; he expects far more than he will ever find ; he loves to be persecuted for religion, because he cares for no one, and loves to stand alone in the world ; when he prays he is fervent, when he repents he is desperate, — ever resolving, yet ever failing ; ever devoted, yet often disappointed ; ever zealous, yet often indiscreet, — how many a warm-hearted Christian is like the apostle St. Peter,—with all the beauties of warmth, affection, and determination, and all the errors of his hastiness, thoughtlessness, and inconsistency. Then this man, like St. Peter, wants grace against the hour of temptation, he wants to pray ; his disposition will not carry him through, his feelings are not enough ; he must watch and pray lest he enter into temptation.

Do I speak to such a character ? In spite of all your good intention, do you often fall ? are you often irresolute ? are you often inconsistent ? Was not St. Peter so in the garden ? he thought

as well of his intentions as you do, and he had as good right. Then, warm-hearted and yet often inconsistent Christian, "watch and pray."

2. Take St. John. How different a character to St. Peter was St. John! He loved so much, so deeply; he had torn up his affections from some family around whom they had clung; he had renounced the soothing influence of society or the allurements of domestic life, to bear through a life of tribulation the cross of his injured Master. St. John's character was all of a gentle and quiet nature; his love was perhaps more deep, because it was more calm; his love for Jesus made him desire to avenge His injuries by fire on the Samaritan cities; his love for Him brought him to the cross to see the end, when all the rest were fled away. His love to Jesus was the cause for which the mother of his Lord was given to his charge. It led him to endure in after-days trials and persecutions for His sake, to bear witness before rulers and councils, and spend a life of solitude and banishment; and yet it was a retiring and unobtrusive love, it made no open protestations, it acted what it felt, and proved its sincerity by its suffering. But yet, with all this tenderness, and gentleness, and love, he fell.

There are many like St. John ! Many a meek, retiring character, scarcely known beyond their domestic circle, whose affections cling so closely to some few objects of this lower earth, that they forget the calls of ambition ; forego without a sigh the more glittering honours and pleasures of society, to devote their hours and their efforts to the few around whom they cling. Meek and gentle in their nature, they seldom harm those whose more active character leads them into a sphere of a more energetic nature. Such is the mother whose affections and time are devoted to her family. Such is the friend who passes by with indifference the showy and dazzling objects of the world, which to him have no attractions. Such is the meek and gentle spirit whose very nature is to yield, to bear, and to forgive. But St. John was bidden “to watch and pray,” and those like him may learn that, gifted with whatever beauty of character, they need grace to prevent the study of God and the discipline of self hindering their duty to their neighbour.

3. Take St. James. We do not know much of St. James in holy Scripture. His character, as given by tradition, was that of courage. He was the first martyred apostle, and a missionary.

But courage and strength of mind are not

enough to guard us against temptation; the man strongest in purpose may be the weakest Christian.

Those endued with the highest moral courage need also "to watch and pray," lest they lean on strength of natural character rather than the power of grace, and take pride in themselves.

SERMON XX.

THE ATTENDANTS ON THE FOUR LAST SCENES.

No. III. THE JUDGMENT-HALL, No. 1.

Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment, and it was early.—JOHN xviii. 28.

THE habit we have formed from infancy of reading the sacred narratives of the Bible is often the cause of our ideas of the connection of events being very indistinct and confused. For example: we have but a general and indefinite idea of the times of each event of our Lord's life, of the order of the discourses, of the circumstances of each year of our Lord's life separately; most especially of the order of events immediately before His death and resurrection. This is partly owing to the varieties in the four gospel accounts, the different order in which events are placed in them, and the omission of some events which are mentioned in one Gospel. Sometimes the different accounts given in each seem to confuse us, and add to the intricacy of

our views of the general story. There are really no difficulties. St. John's Gospel was written to fill up what was left out by the other three. St. Luke is the writer who attends most strictly to the order of events in our Lord's life, as he distinctly says is his intention. St. Matthew rather places everything according to a classification of the *nature* of each event and fact. St. Mark wrote under the immediate direction of St. Peter. It is important to keep as clear an idea of the distinct order of Gospel history as possible, especially of the closing events of our Saviour's life on earth, as it impresses them more deeply and vigorously on the mind; to strive to bring them all before us as events really happening, to picture the very scenery before our mind, to know distinctly what were the events in the house of Annas and Caiaphas, what in the judgment-hall, what at Herod's palace. It requires some care to gain this knowledge clearly, and when gained, will without doubt benefit us much; we shall much more realize all the sufferings of Jesus Christ, we shall feel Him more sensibly to have been a Man, while often now there hangs a kind of mystery and want of reality in our ideas of the stories of His life and death, from the indistinctness we have of the course of events,

which makes us almost forget that He "was a man, subject to like passions as we are." For example, how much additional force is given to the discourses about the last day when we know that they were delivered two days before He died on the cross ; to the prediction of St. Peter's denial, when it was made on the walk from the passover to Gethsemane ; to the discourses about the Comforter, when we know that they were given at the institution of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

With this view I briefly traced our Lord's proceedings in their order from the institution of the sacrament to the arrival in the garden. Let us now trace His history from the garden to the judgment-hall, the next scene which we proposed to contemplate.

The first thing done was to take Him to the house of Annas, partly because they were obliged to pass the house of Annas in reaching the Temple from Gethsemane, and partly because Annas was president of the Sanhedrin, or council of the Jews. After this our Lord was examined by the Jews three times : 1, by Caiaphas *alone*, which was at two in the morning, and when the council of the Jews had not yet assembled ; 2, before the council, which lasted one hour, in

which they tried to settle what was His exact offence, and of what He should be accused by them to Pilate. At the end of this trial our Lord was insulted in the way which we find mentioned in the gospel. 3. Another short examination before the same council, in which they asked the questions, "Art Thou the Christ?" and, "Art Thou the Son of God?" They were obliged to find some distinct offence of which to charge Him before they could take Him before the governor. St. Peter's first denial was a little before the end of the first examination; his third, a little before the end of the second, or about three in the morning. He was sitting warming himself at the fire raised at the end of the hall; after the first denial he retired further from the fire, but after the second and third denial we find "our Lord turned and looked on Peter." What power, what love, what reproof, must have mingled in that look! The eye of St. Peter met his injured Master's, and he shrunk beneath its glance; he threw his mantle across his face, as the original words seem exactly to mean, and went out.

After this was the suicide of Judas, when he heard that the Jewish council had determined to send Jesus to Pilate, which he knew was decisive

of His fate. Our Lord was then led to Pilate to be condemned. When He was first brought, the Jews did not enter the Prætorium, and consequently Pilate came out to them. So Jesus and they were standing without when the conversation took place in St. John xviii. 29—32. Then Pilate went in to the Prætorium, and called Jesus after him alone, when the conversation took place about *truth*. Then Pilate left Jesus, and went and spoke to the accusers without, and the conversation took place related in St. John xviii. 38. Now was the first express conviction of the innocence of Jesus, and the first demand for Barabbas. His proposal for the release of our Lord being refused, he returned to Him and ordered Him to be scourged, hoping thereby to mitigate His punishment. Then he brought Jesus out, wearing the purple robe and the crown of thorns. Hereupon, as He stood without to be gazed upon by the people, occurred the conversation in St. John xix. 6—8. A third time He was led back,—conversation, xix. 9—11; and a fourth time Pilate came out himself, and made the fifth intercession with the people. Hitherto, there had been no public examination. In consequence of the last declaration, “If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar’s friend,” Pilate sat down

on the judgment-seat and proceeded to examine Him in public. At this moment arrived the message of Pilate's wife. The first question was then asked,—“Art Thou the King of the Jews?” followed by the silence of our Lord. At this moment, hearing that Jesus was of Galilee, Pilate sent Him to Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, under whose jurisdiction He by right came. This would have been early in the morning (seven o'clock). On His return He was hailed “King of the Jews,” and the conversation related in St. John xix. 14. took place. Pilate tried to get Him released, but finding the effort vain, he called for water, and washed his hands of His Blood. This being done, he sacrificed Him to their will, and, according to the Roman custom, delivered Him to be scourged. The scourging took place in public, and then Jesus, being clothed in His own raiment, was led away by four soldiers to Calvary to be crucified.

This, then, is the history of the acts and sufferings of Jesus from the time that He left the garden to the procession to Mount Calvary,—the acts of the judgment-hall. Now let us, in order to follow out the plan I at first laid down, examine the characters and situation of the various persons and parties concerned in the trials

of our Lord, with reference and comparison to our own situation under similar circumstances.

Take, then, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the soldiers, the people, Pilate, Pilate's wife, and Peter denying Christ. Let us compare each of these characters with the different classes of persons amongst us under similar situations and circumstances, and with the same duties to be fulfilled.

1. The situation in which they all were. Their duty was to believe in, love, and obey the Lord Jesus Christ, who, having come down from heaven, and taken on Him the form of a servant, was now unjustly betrayed by a treacherous friend, and left in their power. Such was their duty,—fulfilled or unfulfilled, we shall see presently.

This duty was to some a matter of ignorance; that is, they did not know what their duty was in that particular, being blinded by prejudice, or by self-will, or by circumstances; but in most of them there was a degree of ignorance occasioned by their own fault. All might have avoided it if they would, (though all had not the same advantages,) and some sinned from no ignorance at all, but with perfect knowledge, against conscience. This, then, divides them into two

classes, — those who sinned from ignorance, which ignorance was their own fault ; and those who sinned not from ignorance, but with knowledge, and against conscience. And their particular sin was, that they rejected the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory—some in principle and practice, and some in practice only.

2. It will not be difficult to see that every assembled body of professing Christians resembles very nearly the various characters of the judgment-hall. All openly professing to wish to do right, to fulfil their duty before God and their neighbour ; some intending this in heart, some intending very far otherwise ; some thinking they are right when they are wrong. Take those to-day assembled here : are there not before me a large body who call themselves by the Name of Christ, who have been baptized into Christ's Church, who have bowed the head and bent the knee before His Name to-day ? Yet under all this outward show, is there not a strange mixture ? Here there is a man with all this profession, without one spark of vital godliness in the heart,—repeating with his lips what he never felt within his soul. There is another, who, going beyond this, not only does not feel, but openly despises and ridicules, the very work-

ng principles of that religion he professes to believe in. 'There is another, who feels the truth of it all, and respects it, but has not the courage and resolution to act upon it. Some say, "Crucify Him, crucify Him;" others, "I know not the man." The open and scornful enemy cries, "Crucify Him, crucify Him;" and the trembling, cowardly believer says, "I know not the man." The half-enlightened and conscience-stricken man says, "I find no fault in Him." But one and all may be joining in condemning and deserting Jesus Christ and His religion, and either despise or are ashamed of obedience to His laws.

Thus far, then, are the parties at the judgment-hall like the different classes of professing Christians.

But now let us proceed to examine more particularly the characters with reference to men now-a-days.

I said above that they were divided into two classes,—those who sinned from culpable ignorance, and those who sinned with knowledge, and therefore more directly against conscience. The first is the largest division, according to our present subject.

3. The PHARISEES.—I mentioned, first, that these were some of the most conspicuous of the throng.

These were a set of men, or a set of religionists, who boasted that they were peculiarly acceptable to God on account of their *knowledge* of the law. They believed the souls of men were immortal, and would be punished hereafter for sins done in the flesh; they thought God was *bound* to shew them favours, and to make them happy, and *could* not condemn any of them: their grounds of justification were the merits of Abraham. Such was their belief and their opinions; now their defects and errors. They considered there was but little harm in impure affections, and the passion of anger; they adhered so closely to the letter of the Mosaic law as to think it enough to love their neighbours, if they loved no one else besides; they were avaricious, and devoted to riches, desirous of vainglory, and strongly impressed with the idea of their own sanctity; they hated Jesus Christ because His doctrines were pure, His demands spiritual, His judgment stretching to the thoughts and intents of the heart; they persecuted Him through His life of goodness, mercy, and love; they tried to annoy and perplex Him with their questions, but failed; they followed Him with their persecutions to the judgment-hall, and joined in the cry, "Away with Him; crucify Him."

There are many Pharisees among us now,—men who hold with scrupulous tenacity to the *law* of God ; men who cling to the minutest letter of the commandments of morality ; men who would turn with scornful contempt from the most devoted child of God, if he erred in the least degree from the strictness of their injunctions : one act of inconsistency, or accidental dishonesty, is at once enough excuse for them to denounce the character of the man as despicable, and religion altogether as enthusiasm. But with all this strictness, where is their religion ? They do not swear, they do not lie, they do not openly resent an injury ; but still, where is their religion ? There is no fervour in their prayers, no devotion in their feelings, no spirituality in their conversation, no warning in their advice, nothing of Christ in their spirit or their thoughts : cold, heartless, unmeaning formalists, attending to every minute form, despising religion when influencing the conduct, or giving a tone to the conversation ; resentful, though without murder ; lustful, though without adultery ; covetous, without theft ; breakers of Sunday, though church-goers ; calmly contemptuous, though without slander,—saying prayers, but not praying ; persecutors, without allowing it ; in-

fidels, though without professing it ; sinners in heart, though saints in form,—Pharisees in spirit, though Christians in name. There are many among us who, hating the humble, self-denying, though sometimes erring, Christian, and preferring to him the open and godless profligate,—extending to the latter what they never would to the former,—if they dared, would with their lips, and do dare in their hearts, to cry out, “ Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas.”

The SADDUCEES were the next.—They believed that besides God there was no other spiritual being, and that there was no resurrection. They were remarkable for their splendid, and luxurious, and profligate mode of living,—indulging to the utmost the pleasures of sense ; reckless of death, because their eternity was to be spent in nothingness ; fearless of God, because they should never meet Him face to face ; and regardless of man, because death was soon to free them from his opinion. Nothing could be more offensive to the luxurious Sadducees than the self-denying, spiritual doctrines of Jesus of Nazareth. And they too, in their splendid pomp, followed the despised Nazarene, to beseech that He might be crucified.

Need we look far for the Sadducee of a more

modern day and more enlightened time? Go to the sumptuous halls of wealth and splendour, where profuse magnificence has to strive to make a heaven of earth, a paradise of sensual joy: do these men, in their whirl of splendid luxury, practically, inwardly, heartily believe that there is an eternity of reward and retribution? do they believe there is a judgment? do they believe there is either "angel or spirit?" It is impossible. Go to the less luxurious homes of the sensual, though less wealthy, men of the middle or poorer classes of society,—where only pleasure is thought of, only self is consulted, intemperance, idleness, uncleanness, pursued to the last pitch of possibility,—do these practically, heartily believe that there is a resurrection, angel, or spirit? They say it, but the heart belies the lip: they are worse than infidels, and they detest the Name and mention of Jesus Christ. His religion, which consists in mortifying the flesh and taking up the cross,—how revolting to their feelings! They hide not their Sadducean luxury behind the broad border of the Pharisaic phylactery, but more openly, more honestly, more daringly, and more expressly cry, "Not this man, but Barabbas."

Now the two cases I have drawn—the cold,

heartless, unspiritual formalist, resembling the Pharisee; and the luxurious, undissembling profligate, resembling the Sadducee—will exactly agree in this particular, that they hate Christ, they despise His servants, they shun His religion, they had rather associate with the profane than the Christian in practice, and thereby cry, “Not this man, but Barabbas.”

PILATE, I mentioned next.—This is a peculiar character. He was a servant of the heathen religion; he was open to conviction; he was weak and irresolute, and fearful of human opinion; yet his conscience told him that Jesus was innocent, and it impelled him to desire to save Him:—“I find no fault in Him.” Like Felix, the heathen governor, he trembled; but yet, against his conscience, he yielded Jesus to be crucified.

Such men we often find around us. Conceive a case:—A man is brought up in a certain line of views; he is taught and bent to despise spiritual religion, and to think all religious people fools and enthusiasts, though, as far as they go, very harmless. Or he may be taught to take a more open course against them; his mind reflects on things about him; as he grows up, he cannot see so much harm

in religious people as he was told; they are certainly more serious, and think less of pleasure; but then they are providing against a time for which the irreligious are unprovided and have no hope at all; they are looking to a period which must evidently, unavoidably, come soon, when they must give an account for the things done in the body. He is struck with this; there seems, after all, some sense in religious people; he strives to burst the shackles of prejudice and education, and to be religious, to love Christ, as well as to call himself a Christian; he sees no fault in Him; he is forced to ask, with a conscientious firmness, of the religious man he was taught to despise, "Why, what evil has he done?" His intention is given out, he will think better of religion, he will respect the religious man, he will defend the cause of Christ. No sooner has he made his declaration, than the relations who educated him, the friends he associates with, the world who observe him, cry out against the honest determination of an honest man,— "If thou take up the cause of religion, thou art no more our friend. Whosoever speaketh in favour of religion speaketh against the common voice of the world." Startled, yet still convinced of

the innocence of the cause, the hesitating character wavers; he still cannot find fault in the cause, but the clamours of the world run high, and, undecided, irresolute, weak, he drowns the voice of conscience, and delivers himself to their will.

There are many characters like this; inwardly convinced, yet ashamed to confess the truth of the religion they have been taught to despise; struggling a few moments with the stream of opposition, making a few buffets with the wave, and then, overwhelmed with the voice of numbers, and trembling at the opinion of men, yielding all they think right to the will and senseless clamour of a godless world.

This last differs from the other two in that he has more conscience—its voice is not so dead; he knows what is right, he trembles at not acting it. He once knew what was right, but has ceased to know it and to feel it now; he has no inclination to obey a God or seek a heaven in which he scarcely holds belief. He trembles while he turns away from a God he *knows* is just, and rushes to perdition because he has not the determination to act independently. He will soon be what the others now are—given over to a hard heart.

Do not sin against conscience: it is a dreadful thing to know right and act wrong; it is a dreadful thing to be influenced by the voice of the world against our own conscience, to deliver our actions to their will.

These all conspired to condemn Jesus Christ. So do you who may be like them,—you who love pleasure, you who have no spirituality, you who tremble at the opinions of men; you who prefer the wicked, the gay, the thoughtless, to the religious,—you, as they did formerly, ask Barabbas and destroy Christ.

SERMON XXI.

THE ATTENDANTS ON THE FOUR LAST SCENES.

No. III. THE JUDGMENT-HALL, No. 2.

Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment, and it was early.—JOHN xviii. 28.

THE heart of man is the same in every age, always what it was from the first—desperately wicked; in every assembly of persons we shall find a mixture of characters, though among all the larger number will be bad. False charity will try and deny this; false charity will declare it untrue that the greater number of mankind are on the broad road to destruction; and in order to prove its point, it must make a shift to deny that so much is required of the traveller to eternity as the servant of God would declare. This false charity begins by lowering the standard of Gospel requirements; by healing up wounds that ought to be probed; by crying *peace, where there is no peace.*” This

false charity tells men they may indulge in pleasure, they need not deny themselves, they may enjoy the world,—life was never meant to be gloomy, and therefore they infer it was never meant to be religious. It tells men much of the mercy of God—much of the weakness of human nature—much of the natural goodness, benevolence, high-mindedness of man; little of the desperate wickedness of the heart, of the heinousness of one act of sin, of the sacrifice sin required, of the perfect submission necessary to the merits of Christ. All this it leaves out. And why? Plainly because, if all this were true, men must be compelled to confess, “There are few that be saved.” So they enlarge to the utmost the limits of the Gospel; they deny one text and explain away another, and make the sacrifice of Christ well-nigh of no effect at all.

Now this is not religion. We are to hope the best of everybody—we are to think little indeed of ourselves—we are to exert ourselves to the utmost to bring all to the knowledge of the truth; but we are not to deny and make void the written law of God, and make His word of none effect.

In every assembly of persons, then, we must,

from what we know of human nature, presume that many of them are, unless we know to the contrary, either intentionally or by self-deceit, the enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ in their hearts. That while it contains all shades of character, all possible degrees of sin, all varieties of hope offered by each case, still that the larger part need warning, advising, and directing; the smaller need comforting. So it was with the various characters and groups gathered in the judgment-hall to witness or take part in the trial and condemnation of Jesus. And so it is now with those before me; many in all probability need warning or directing: although in a congregation gathered in a church, it is less likely to be the case, as I have described it above, than in any other assembly of persons.

We will, then, continue the examination of the characters in the judgment-hall, discovering if among any of them we may class ourselves, either in respect of individual disposition or the working of any external cause, in leading us to the sin of which they were guilty—the denial, rejection, or contempt of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have found out that the sin of many of those present was—either from ignorance, which ignorance was their own fault, or with knowledge

and against conscience—the rejection of the Son of God. In this respect, how many professing Christians in the present day are like them—rejecting in their heart, and shewing it by their conduct, the religion of the Son of God.

We took the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Pilate.

The Pharisees, as a likeness of those cold-hearted, self-righteous, spiritually proud formalists, who, while they profess great things themselves, and propose themselves as instructors and patterns to others, despise real, spiritual religion; and preferring the man without a spark of spirituality to the humble, self-denying, yet sometimes inconsistent servant of God, raise the same cry as the Pharisees,—“Not this man, but Barabbas.”

The Sadducees, as a likeness of those sensual, pleasure-seeking, and thoughtless men, who, without a thought about death, without a care about eternity, without a consideration of God, without a caution to their own soul, say to their soul, “Eat, drink, and be merry, take thy pleasure while there is life and time;” and preferring the merriest heart and the least serious character, scarcely believing there is a God at all, thinking religion is the foible for the weak and foolish, ask Barabbas and destroy Jesus.

Pilate, as a likeness of the man who, undecided as to the course he should pursue, prejudiced by education or his associates against spiritual, vital godliness, yet feeling by his conscience that religion is right, and is by far the happiest, after all, feels a strong inclination to renounce the persuasions of a wicked world, and the opinions of those who only pursue their own pleasures, and to follow the despised cause of true religion and Jesus Christ ; but without courage, without firmness, without strength of independent principle, yields to the persuasions of the world, and gives up his own conscience "to their will."

These characters we have examined ; we will now proceed to the character of

Pilate's wife.—All we know of this person is contained in Matt. xxvii. 19, in the following words : "When he (Pilate) was set down on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just Man : for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him."

Now, though the account we have of her is short, there is something very striking about the character of this wife of Pilate. She was by religion a heathen, and did not believe in the

true God, but yet she seemed open to conviction : she had a conscience, and she boldly acted up to its dictates and its calls. She knew what was right in certain respects ; she felt inwardly convinced that the dream she had had was sent by the God she ought to obey, and that Jesus was a good and just man : impelled by this conviction, though ignorant, and knowing little of the truth of divine things, she boldly and unhesitatingly sent to her husband, to arrest his proceedings against Jesus.

Now there are some characters like this : men who are but little enlightened as to the truth ; men who are ignorant in many respects with regard to religion, yet are independent, act up to the calls of conscience as far as they feel and know what is right, and are not influenced by the opinion of the world ; who are anxious to know more and more of their duty, and determine to act upon it when they know it. Such characters we commonly call *honest characters*. But we must still remember, honesty and sincerity,—however much we may esteem and love them when we meet them amid so much hypocrisy and false profession we find in the world,—yet, I say, honesty and sincerity must not be taken in the place of religion ; it

is of no use, towards reaching heaven, to be an honest infidel. Pilate's wife, with all her honesty, was not so near heaven as Peter the apostle, with all his inconsistency. There must be a love for Christ in the heart, or the best intentions are useless; yet if there is an honest, open-minded, independent man among us,—one who is anxious to know more what is right, that he may do it,—let him thank God for his honest wish; let him cherish, as his best treasure, his open, independent heart; let him pursue his course, asking God to help him in the pursuit of his duty; and God will help him—will guide, will direct him. Only let him never consent to hear what he feels right evil spoken of; never allow the good and just to be insulted without a remonstrance; never let the profane be preferred to the upright; but, like Pilate's wife, with little knowledge, but still a desire to act up to that, have nothing to do in the insult or persecution of those “just men” who they know fear God.

I cannot leave this character without adding one more word. There is so much dishonesty among professing Christians,—men trust so much to holding a certain style of views, and being satisfied with that, do not make any effort

at attending to those *moral duties* which, though not sufficient in themselves to take us to heaven, still adorn the Christian character,—and being without which shews a character without grace.

Do I speak to one who, having been but a short time in the road to heaven, knows but little? Does he hear Jesus Christ ill-spoken of? does he feel that to listen to that is a sin,—that he ought to take a more bold and decisive part, consistent with his profession? Then, I say, it is that man's duty to *act*, and not to *doubt*. If his mind is “suffering many things” on this account, he should speak out plainly and honestly, and he will be no loser in earth or heaven.

There was one body of men who took a part in the proceedings of the judgment-hall, whom we will next notice—“*the people* ;” that feeble, changing, unsteady multitude who on Sunday with loud voices followed Jesus to the city—“Hosannah to the Son of God,”—and now on Friday thronged around Him—“Away with Him, away with Him ; crucify Him.”

And away with whom? who is He against whom the shout is raised by Pharisee and Sadducee, priest and publican, rich and poor, king and governor? Is it some malefactor, whose life

on earth has been a source of misery to his fellow-beings, whose hand has been stained with his brother's blood, and estate enriched by his neighbour's property? "*Away with Him!*" Away with whom? Is it Barabbas they would away with? even *then* they might have pitied more. No, it is the meek and lowly Jesus, around whom two days ago they gathered to praise and glorify; He who raised their children from the bed of sickness, and cheered their widows' hearts, and bid them weep no more; He who took their little infants in His arms and blessed them; He who never returned an answer to their unkindness, nor a word of reproof for all their cruelty; He who *would* have folded them in His arms of mercy, and *did* love them with a more than brother's affection. He it was against whom the cry was raised, "Not this man, but Barabbas." Against Him the judgment-hall now rung with accusation; against Him were raised the very voices who had blessed Him a little time ago; against Him were all the powers of Jerusalem leagued in opposition: "they denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto them."

This was the situation of that body who, as we are told by St. Matthew, the chief priests

and elders persuaded they should ask Barabbas and destroy Jesus ; and without one feeling of gratitude, without a thought or consideration of what they were about to do, they obeyed the impulse of feeling their rulers gave them, and at once demanded the crucifixion of Christ.

We find many characters like this ; men just influenced by the feeling of the moment, without any stable principle, and governed by the voice of those among whom they are, especially if they be people of influence or power. When circumstances touch their feelings—death, family affliction, or the like—they are melted into a kind of regard, or what they call *love*, for Jesus Christ ; they pray, they weep for sin, they seek the society of the good, they feel resolutely, for the time, determined to live for God. Presently the scene changes—they come into the society of those who do not fear God ; everything they see and hear is of a different nature ; pleasure seems attractive, and they are inclined and persuaded to think there is no harm in it ; all their good resolutions go,—and why ? Because they never had any depth of *principle* ; because it never was anything but feeling ; there was no settled intention to serve God at the expense of self ; there was only a *wish to go to heaven* : it

was like the wind blowing against a stream, which seems for a moment to change its course, but in fact it flows down as before ; it was mere excitement of mind, it was not religion, though, if they had used it aright, it would have ended in religion. It is a feeling allowed us by God, to help us to begin to think seriously, but it will not last long, it will soon go ; they should have used it while they had it. It was an *inclination* to think well of Christ, not a *love* for Him ; for had they loved Him, they would have borne anything for His sake, and as it was they bore nothing. The first cry against Him, and they were changed in their purpose : they thought they could have died for Him a little time ago, now they cry, “ Away with Him, crucify Him ! ” They thought they *were* religious,—it was a mistake, it was a mere feeling ; they love the world better ; they ask Barabbas and destroy Jesus.

If I speak to such now—men who are only religious by fits and starts, and who turn against Christ the moment they are in ungodly society—let me remind them that they have mistaken the use of their *easily touched feelings* : they were meant for *good*, and they *were good*, as far as they went ; but you ought to have followed them up by prayer, by self-examination, by efforts to

turn to righteous ways ; and so it is your own fault if they all go away. If you love Christ, you deny yourself, bear your cross, endure the shame. It will not be only crying Hosannah with the multitude—it will be standing by Him and His servants when all men speak ill of them. Do you love Jesus Christ ? do you wish to love Him ? Then do not trust to your feelings ; they will mislead you ; they will cry “ Hosannah ” to-day, and “ Away with Him ! ” to-morrow ; they will be for Jesus on the way to the city, and Barabbas in the judgment-hall ; they will join you with the poor disciples to-day, with the proud Pharisees to-morrow. Then do not trust your feelings ; see what they lead you to do for Christ’s sake. If the people had stood by Christ then, if they had not listened to the Pharisees then, we should have thought well of them. Every day deny yourself in something for Christ’s sake : “ They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.” Every day deny yourself something : your *eyes*, an object of mere curiosity ; your *tongue*, everything that may feed vanity or vent envy ; the *palate*, dainties ; the *ears*, flattery, and whatever corrupts the heart ; the *body*, ease and luxury ; bearing all the inconveniences of

life for Christ's sake—cold, hunger, restlessness, ill-health, sleepless nights, unwelcome news, the faults of servants, contempts, ingratitude of friends, malice of enemies, calumnies, your own failings, low spirits, the struggle of overcoming your corruptions. Bear all these, with God's help, for Christ's sake; see that your feelings lead you to all this; *then* you may *trust your love for Christ*.

The *soldiers* were the next class in the judgment-hall we might refer to for a moment. They were Roman soldiers, and by religion, of course, heathens; they acted under the command of Pilate, and seem to have borne a hard and cruel temper throughout the trial. They crowned Him with thorns, spat upon Him, set Him at nought, struck Him with the palms of their hands, insulted Him, and finally led Him to be crucified.

Now of all the characters we have examined, these most resemble the Sadducees. They differ in this—that they act more completely under the influence of others, without thought, knowledge, or consideration.

These are like men who go on in a course of sin, without one thought as to the way they are walking in, knowing nothing, thinking,

caring nothing; the mere creatures of prejudice and pleasure; men who have never had a good thought, because they have never had a thought at all. Is there an individual of this kind here — led by some providence, or some mere curiosity, to come to church just this once? Immortal creature, what shall I say to you? You are waging war with the great God! you are enlisted in the ranks of the fallen angels, joining with Satan, against Jesus, the Son of God! What shall I say to you? Have you an arm to contend with God? Can you root out even a tree from the ground where it stands by your own strength? How can you resist the Almighty? He says, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." Oh immortal sinner, what shall I say to you? Repent, and be converted; "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be saved." Forsake the counsel of the ungodly; forsake the conversation of the scoffer, blasphemer, and liar; forsake the lust of the adulterer; forsake the table of the drunkard and the gambler; read the Word of God, attend the divine service in the house of God; "return to the Lord, and He will have mercy upon you, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."

Before I conclude, let me refer to one more character concerned in the judgment of Jesus Christ—the *penitent Peter*. Though he had loved his Master deeply, for a moment he had joined with the rest, and condemned Him by a denial.

And so, while around us on every side the wicked persecute the friends of Jesus, the irresolute finally desert Him, the ignorant openly defy Him, His own servants, by their inconsistencies, often injure His cause, and give occasion to blasphemy. There is a difference in their conduct: the inconsistent Christian does it but for a moment, and then, oh how bitter is his repentance! while the unjust is unjust still, while the scoffer is a scoffer still, while the waverer is a waverer still, the servant of Christ who has once denied cannot wait to face his injured Master, but goes out to weep bitterly.

I speak to Christians now, — Christians in heart as well as name; I speak to some who love the Lord. You are often inconsistent; you often grieve Jesus Christ; you often do more harm to Him than the most openly wicked. By that denial, Peter would have done more harm to Jesus than the condemnation of Pilate

or the shout of the people. Aim at consistency. When the Christian father gives way to passion, anger, violence, and severity towards his children, he denies the power of the law of Christ over him, and thereby denies Christ. When the Christian master neglects the Sabbath, the Sacrament, or any means of grace; when he indulges in the oath, or intemperance, or temper—then he denies the force of religion over him, and thereby denies Christ. When the Christian neighbour is guilty of slander, unkindness, calumny, or ill-nature; when they are jealous or discontented,—then, by denying the power over themselves under which *they profess* to be, they deny Christ.

But I have done. We have examined the characters of the judgment-hall. Deserted by His friends and devoted by His foes, Jesus was led away amid the shouting multitude to be crucified. And on the hill of sacrifice He prayed for the pardon of the men who had injured Him; He prayed God to forgive the haughty Pharisee, the sensual Sadducee, the irresolute Pilate, the thoughtless multitude, the ignorant soldiers, who were killing Him without a cause. *To Peter* He vouchsafed a *look*—one look, to speak of His love; that spoke

all, — reproof, sorrow, pardon. To all of you does He say the same. You that have mocked Him by your formality, insulted Him by your self-indulgence, injured Him by your irresolution, hated Him in your ignorance, will you not turn to Him? He offers you pardon ; on His own servant who has sinned He looks, to pardon while He reproofs, to encourage while He chastens.

SERMON XXII.

THE ATTENDANTS ON THE FOUR LAST SCENES.

No. IV. THE CROSS.

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

JOHN xix. 25.

THE judgment was over, and, having condemned Him to be deserving of death, He was led away between four soldiers to be crucified. Two thieves were taken with Him,—probably companions and accomplices of Barabbas. He, if Jesus had been liberated, would probably have occupied His place between the other two. Just at this moment, in all probability, they met with Simon of Cyrene. It was part of the punishment for the sufferer to carry his own cross; therefore, probably, Simon carried the end of the cross, while our Lord bore its head. His body, worn out with pain, and fatigue, and mental agony, was unable to bear up beneath

the heavy weight, the cross being a large and ponderous piece of wood. The other two were left to carry theirs: perhaps the seeming innocence of Jesus may have induced the soldiers to pity and relieve Him. While on the procession to Calvary, and still in the streets, the women of Galilee were standing to see it go by. They had been watching for the sad train, and at last it came,—Jesus, the two thieves, the twelve soldiers, and Simon. When they came to them, struck by a kind of awe, the soldiers stopped, and Jesus addressed the poor women who had been the attendants and sharers of His sorrows from the time He left Galilee to His last scene. At last they came to Calvary; it was strewn with the white skulls of those who had been crucified. While they were preparing the cross for erection they offered Him the vinegar and gall, usually given to allay the suffering of the victim; but in this case refused by Jesus, unwilling to make any lighter the pain He bore for us. While they were nailing Him to the cross He offered up the prayer—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." They then fastened His accusation on the cross; the soldiers then cast lots for His garments; after this, the sitting down of the guard to

watch the bodies. It was now the third hour of the day ; they had probably left the judgment-hall at the second ; the distance to Calvary was about three-quarters of a mile, and the procession would move slowly. Now came the insults offered to Him as He hung on the cross, and the penitence of the thief. It was then the sixth hour.

At this time our blessed Lord commended His mother to the care of St. John, the beloved disciple, which was followed by the darkness for the space of three hours more, until the ninth hour. When the darkness passed away, and the offering of the evening sacrifice was about to begin, Jesus uttered the first verse of the 22nd Psalm : " My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? " After this He cried, " I thirst ; " then, " Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit ; " and then He bowed His head and gave up the ghost. The veil of the Temple was rent in twain, the bodies of the saints arose, and the people who had come to the sight returned, beating their breasts, as if under the consciousness of a great sin.

This, then, closes the Passion. We have traced Him from Bethany to the city, from the last supper to the garden, from the garden to the

hall of judgment, from the hall of judgment to the hill of Calvary. There are many reflections force themselves on us in reading His sufferings:—the guilt of sin, that required such a death; the love of Jesus, that bore it; the sympathy of His human nature. “In all our afflictions He was afflicted;” there was no sorrow like unto His sorrow; His was a life of trouble from the first: trouble and contempt were borne by Him at the manger-cradle and at the shameful cross. And all this was for our sins; every hour of suffering, every drop of blood, was wiping out some sin, some infirmity of yours, so as only you will repent and believe the Gospel.

We have gathered to-day to celebrate His death; we have come together as sinners, without Him helpless, to thank Him for His suffering, and to gain the benefit of it for ourselves. Then let us try to behold Him with the eye of faith; to behold Him as our Redeemer, our Intercessor, our Pattern; behold Him shewing forth the perfect pattern of Christian conduct, enduring the contradiction of sinners, meekly appealing to His acknowledged innocence; reviled, but not reviling; buffeted, but not retaliating. Behold Him under the hand of man, torn and wounded, bleeding and lacerated by

thorns and nails ; behold Him forsaken of God ; behold Him, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world ; behold Him now on the right hand of the throne of God, where He ever liveth to make intercession for you, knowing your infirmities, touched with your sorrows, praying for your souls.—Oh who shall separate you from His love ?

Having, then, beheld the Son of God, as the Captain of our salvation, made perfect through suffering, we will continue our first intention, and contemplate the characters attendant on the crucifixion, and, placing ourselves in their situation, may find our own case like theirs.

Now there are three or four different parties mentioned as being at the cross,—the centurion ; the people ; the relations of Jesus, His mother, Mary Magdalene, and St. John the Evangelist.

1. We read of more than one centurion in the Bible who served God,—we read of four : the centurion who behaved courteously to St. Paul, the centurion who besought our Saviour for his servant, Cornelius the centurion, and the centurion at the cross. So we learn that no profession, no line of life, no bad company, need prevent a man being holy. The centurion at the cross was fulfilling his duty in guarding the

NO. IV. THE CROSS.

The lesson you learn here is, that "with things are possible;" that you have no reason against the Lord Jesus Christ. You may have doubts and discouragement; so had the centurion, yet God helped him out.

men often plead their profession, trade, calling, as a good reason for their not serving the message of Christ, the Lamb of God,

the accursed tree: "Look unto Me and be saved." And one says, "My profession is up my time; my week-days are spent in daily calling; I have not time to think of Christ, save on Sundays, or now and then; and therefore I cannot come."

Another pleads his trade, "which must be thought of all the week, which must be minded on Sunday, which must gross his thoughts in church;" and therefore that man makes his trade an excuse, and thinks it is a good excuse, and says therefore he cannot come.

Another pleads the concerns and anxieties of a family, and says that is his excuse; excuse for giving way to temper, for neglecting church, for seldom praying, for never doing, for scarcely thinking.

"Let those who have no family," say they, "be religious,—I have

Body. When he left the judgment-hall he looked on Jesus as a malefactor; before he left the hill of Calvary he knew Him to be the Son of God. He little knew the event of a few hours: circumstances, ordered by God, forced him into a knowledge of Jesus Christ. He, perhaps, had been an upright man before, and therefore God permitted His eyes to be opened,—we do not know.

Now we may certainly learn a striking lesson from this. First, (what I said above,) no situation in life *need* prevent a man being a Christian. No situation could be more unfavourable to religion than the Roman army,—an army at this time the seat of dissoluteness and recklessness. But the Roman soldiers, flushed with success, the conquerors already of many lands, accustomed to tyrannize over the vanquished, to spend their days in eating, drinking, and making merry,—none, perhaps, so reckless, so godless, as a Roman soldier; and in this centurion's case most especially were circumstances against him; having heard the condemnation of Jesus from those whom he had been taught to respect, beholding him despised and insulted, hung upon the cross;—everything was against him.

The lesson you learn here is, that “with God all things are possible;” that you have no right to plead your situation in life as a reason against loving the Lord Jesus Christ. You may have difficulties and discouragement; so had the centurion, yet God helped him out.

Men often plead their profession, trade, or station, as a good reason for their not serving God. The message of Christ, the Lamb of God, has been sent out to the whole world, as He hung upon the accursed tree: “Look unto Me and be ye saved.” And one says, “My profession takes up my time; my week-days are spent in my daily calling; I have not time to think of Christ, save on Sundays, or now and then; and therefore I cannot come.” Another pleads his trade, “which must be thought of all the week, which must be minded on Sunday, which must engross his thoughts in church;” and therefore that man makes his trade an excuse, and thinks it is a good excuse, and says therefore he cannot come. Another pleads the concerns and anxieties of a family, and says that is his excuse; his excuse for giving way to temper, for neglecting church, for seldom praying, for never reading, for scarcely thinking. “Let those who have no family,” say they, “be religious,—I have

not time, and I cannot come." Another is obliged to work and live amid the godless and profane, and because that is so injurious to his own spiritual feelings, he lowers *his* principles to *their practice*, and thinks his wicked associates an excuse for his being irreligious, and therefore thinks he cannot come. The mother pleads her infant, the labourer pleads his toil, the tradesman pleads his shop, the farmer pleads his lands, the workman pleads his ungodly companions,—all plead something in their line of life,—some good excuse, as they think, in their especial calling, against coming to Jesus Christ. They go, the one to his farm, the other to his merchandize, and will not come to the marriage supper of the Lamb. There is *no excuse* in all this ; your situation in life is no excuse : you are not to leave it for the minister or the sick alone to serve God ; you are not to leave it for those whose heads are resting on a dying pillow alone ; you are not to leave it for the head that is gray with age alone to come with all the heart to Jesus Christ : No—you are to come yourselves. There is no excuse in all this. If God's Spirit had filled your heart you would come ; you would not plead all this, you would give up your whole soul, and heart, and life to the Lord Jesus Christ,

and having felt your own sins, and the pardoning love of Jesus, you would say with the centurion, "Truly this is the best way, 'truly this is the Son of God.' "

We may remark one thing about this centurion: he was performing his duty when God thus touched him. There were many things around him which struck him as being wonderful in Jesus,—His dying before the others, His dying without the blow which usually released the crucified from their agonies; His being able to cry out, His prayer for His murderers, His promise to the thief, His address to His mother and the disciples. It was the moral scenery of the crucifixion which struck on his mind. But nevertheless there must have been a powerful work of God's Spirit in the heart. There are some who are only affected in this way, *not convinced*; and some, again, convinced and not converted. We do not know which the centurion was; but any way, we know from his story, that no situation in life, no employment, no prejudices, no anxieties, no disadvantages, are enough excuse for want of religion, and for neglecting to feel in the heart the power of the love of Christ.

2. But we must pass on to another. I now refer to persons we have already spoken of, though

under different circumstances. *The people* had gathered in some few straggling bands, to see the sight ; they had followed, perhaps, from the judgment-hall, and keeping up with the mournful procession, had now lingered round the sides of Calvary. Ever changeable as to their feelings with regard to Him, they now were again altered. With praises and hosannahs they had followed Him to the city ; with the cries of “ Crucify Him,” they had driven Him from the judgment-hall ; and now that He had given up the ghost,—now that it was too late to do any good,—now that they had wreaked their vengeance on Him to the last, they were sorry for what they had done : “ and all the people who came together to that sight, beholding the things that were done, smote their breasts and returned.” How exactly did this fulfil the Word of God ! “ They shall look on Him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.”

Misguided, yet sometimes well-intending ; easily touched, yet easily changed ; with feeling, yet without principle ; their minds only open to one side of a case ; affected by His kindness, yet influenced by the voice of the powerful, the com-

mon people of the Jews knew not how to act. They had generally been His supporters ; often we find the rulers would have laid hands on Him, "but they feared the people ;" and yet these very people had been the cause of crucifying Him at last.

How strikingly does this remind us of the case of many a death-bed ! A man has been swayed all his life hither and thither with respect to the course he shall pursue about religion, never having resolved to bear all the difficulties of taking up the cross. He is violent to-day for the opinion he renounces to-morrow. Family affliction, a fit of illness, a breaking constitution, a fever raging in his village, a sudden death, a disappointment, the desertion of a friend,—all these, or others, melt him into a regard for God ; religion becomes a sort of poetical refuge for an unhappy soul ; he becomes religious ; the Name of Jesus soothes his ear, and he flatters himself he loves Him : so did the people when they cried " Hosannah."

A little while, and time heals the sorrow : health takes the place of sickness ; new friends are as good as old ones ; the danger of disease is removed ; his old companions laugh at him ; he is influenced,—he determines that religion is folly, and renounces Jesus.

Another change comes :—*this man must die*. He lies on his deathbed ; there is no hope of life ; his strength fails him, he knows he must go,—what shall he do now ? He must stand before the God he has neglected ; he must meet the judgment he has despised ; he must face the Saviour whom once he felt a regard for, and renounced to follow the persuasion and opinions of the wicked and blaspheming. What shall he do now ? It is too late, perhaps, to feel again what he felt once : his heart is very hard ; he has crucified the Lord of Glory by his sins ; he has despised Him to the last, and perhaps he cannot restore Jesus in living power to his soul again. What can he do but smite his hand upon his breast, “ beholding the things ” which are coming on him. Perhaps he may be able to turn to Christ ; if he can, he may. But suppose he cannot ; suppose his heart is too hard ; suppose he has no inclination to turn to Jesus ; suppose he cannot feel His love ; suppose—awful thought !—suppose *he cannot repent*. He thinks of what he once was,—of the good feelings he once had for Christ, and they are now gone—all gone. Oh, does he not smite his hand upon his breast, when he thinks of the Saviour he has crucified afresh by his sins ? Do not change your mind

about religion ; do not love Christ to-day and forsake Him to-morrow. If illness, sorrow, fear, friends, or anything, have made you think well of Jesus Christ, do not, because the wicked world laughs at you, or old friends chide you, turn away from loving Him ; but cherish the better thoughts you have about religion, and they shall stand you in comfort on your death-bed. Act, as well as feel—advance, as well as begin, and you will not regret it when you come to die.

Thus the centurion and the people both teach you a lesson about the death of Jesus Christ ; the first, that no situation or station shuts out religion,—that nothing should prevent your fixing your best hopes on His death. The second, that you should continue to love Jesus Christ, and not be changeable when you have once begun to love Him, or have found religion to be the best way.

3. We will now take another group of those who gathered near the cross. All His acquaintance, we are told, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.

These women—honoured be their names—were last at the cross and first at the sepulchre.

The disciples—where were they? Those who had been so much more bold in His defence were now away. Peter had denied Him, all had left Him. But the women alone remained to watch Him to the last. They never left Him while they could help; they were in the street as He passed by; they were by the cross, they saw where His Body was laid, they were about early to go to His sepulchre, and now they are at the cross. The crowd was probably so great that they could not approach near the cross, and so they could not stand near it; and then came the darkness, and they could scarcely see Him, and all grew silent, like night, and the soldiers had lain down to watch; and still the women watched, beholding these things. They must have thought all hope was over, that Jesus had left them,—and where was the promise of His redemption? Had He left them? There seemed a doubt, a darkness thrown around everything, but still they lingered by the cross to watch.

And now these women, too, speak a lesson for some of us. The centurion and the people both had a lesson for those who do not yet love God; these women, for those who are God's servants. They loved Christ devotedly; they seemed now deserted, forsaken, and yet they

would not leave Him; they waited to the last, to see the end.

Now very often it is the case that Christians find much disappointment and difficulty in the way to heaven. When they start on a religious course they find themselves supported by brilliant and glowing feelings, which will not last; they are encouraged by hopes which seem soon to be clouded beneath doubt and darkness; they begin the Christian life, thinking they are never to sin again, that all inconsistency is over, that death is always to seem a trifle—the entrance to eternity such that they will never fear it; that their mind will, in short, be in a sort of sunshine of spiritual excitement. They think all this at first, but this is but the beginning; a little while, and a darkness clouds over their scene; they find they do sin, they are inconsistent, they are weak, they are still *men*. Jesus Christ, too, does not seem so very comforting to them as He was; a darkness seems to shroud Him from their view, a darkness covers His cross, and they cannot see Him as they did once. Everything seems against them; the very people among whom they dwell seem unhappy too, and smite their breasts in the same despondency. This is often the history of the Christian,—waiting, waiting, all

seems in vain ; near the cròss of Christ, yet no light, no hope, no comfort ; but still they wait, just like these poor women,—nothing had been brighter than their prospects when first they started on the way to follow Jesus. He was doing good, blessed and blessing, followed by the people, praised by the little children of each village lane and city street. *Now* it was all over: He was despised and rejected of men, nailed on the cross ; His best friends seemed to have deserted His cause—only St. John lingered still ; and He Himself was hid from their eyes.

Does not this describe the case of many children of God, most especially in this one particular,—in the desertion of His cause by those we thought loved Him? Now if this is your case, and surely it must be with some, what is your duty? Like the women of Galilee, *to wait* ; to wait till the darkness has passed away. Jesus is still there ; He sees you through the darkness of this world's trouble, sin, and doubt ; He is there, dying, bleeding, praying for those very sins that obscure your sight of Him. Wait on, —do not go away, do not join the returning and desponding stragglers ; the sunshine will come again, and Jesus loves you as much as ever ; but He never meant you to keep those happy feel-

ings ; He only gave them to win you into the road to heaven ; they were given to make you pray, to make you work, not to remain always, or there would be no trial of your faith. It is in the hour of darkness your faith is tried ; remain through that, fixing your eyes where you know the cross is, and the darkness will pass away, and Jesus will speak to you, to encourage and pardon you. Perhaps it will not come much in this world ; perhaps there will be but a *dawn* here, but there *will* be a morning of resurrection ; then it will be all well. The women were not again happy till Jesus had risen from the dead. Then, like them, wait on, pray on, hope on ; keep your eyes on Jesus crucified ; it shall be all well at last ; for He looks on you—He gave Himself for you, and though now He seem to be away, you may say, “ I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.”

Thus we have examined the three lessons to be drawn from the groups or parties at the cross of Christ—the *centurion*, the *common people*, and the *women of Galilee*,—two addressed to those who do not now love Christ, one to those who do ; one to those who make excuses ; one to those who are changeable about religion ; one to those

who, loving Jesus, yet are now in doubt and darkness. May each be a lesson, a warning, a comfort, to those whose cases they speak. In all, a crucified Saviour was the only hope. That is your only hope too; there is nothing in your own efforts to save you; there is nothing in your own natural disposition, nothing in your amiableness of temper, nothing in your repentance alone, nothing in your comparative seriousness, nothing which can achieve the salvation of your soul, but Jesus Christ and Him crucified; nothing but His cross, which, as on this day, was lifted up for your sakes; nothing but that, which you must bear, by the help of God, and then it will bear you to heaven.





